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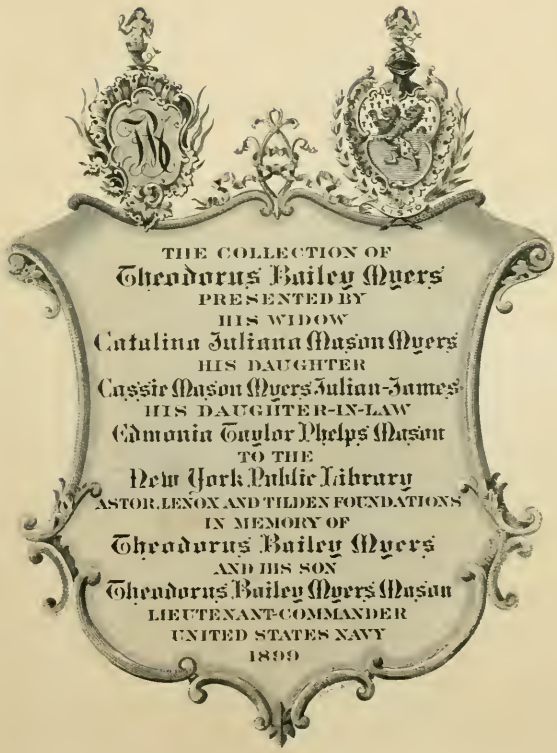
THE COLLECTION OF
Theodorus Bailey Myers
PRESENTED BY
HIS WIDOW
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HIS DAUGHTER
Cassie Mason Myers Julian-James
HIS DAUGHTER-IN-LAW
Edmonia Taylor Phelps Mason
TO THE
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IN MEMORY OF
Theodorus Bailey Myers
AND HIS SON
Theodorus Bailey Myers Mason
LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER
UNITED STATES NAVY
1899

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A

NARRATIVE

OF THE

CAMPAIGNS OF THE BRITISH ARMY,

AT

WASHINGTON,

BALTIMORE, AND NEW ORLEANS,

UNDER

GENERALS ROSS, PAKENHAM, & LAMBERT,

IN THE YEARS 1814 AND 1815;

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF THE COUNTRIES VISITED.

BY AN OFFICER,

WHO SERVED IN THE EXPEDITION.

SUPERANDA OMNIS FORTUNA FERENDO EST.—*Virgil.*

TO WHICH IS ANNEXED,

AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

AN EXPOSITION OF SUNDRY ERRORS IN THE WORK.

PHILADELPHIA:

PUBLISHED BY M. CAREY & SONS,

No. 126, Chesnut Street.

1821.

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TO THE LONDON EDITION.

The following Letters were not the produce of mere recollection, but were formed from the substance of a journal kept, with considerable care, during the progress of the events which they record. Some of these were, indeed, too striking to have been easily forgotten, as to their general character; but for the detail of minute circumstances, which, it is hoped, will be found to possess some degree of interest, memory alone would not have been a secure or sufficient guide. The introductory and final forms of epistolary writing have been purposely omitted; but for all the particulars, however extraordinary, the Author is thus enabled fairly to pledge his credit. The Letters will, perhaps, obtain the more attention, as conveying the first detailed account of this concluding expedition of the war.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE PRESENT EDITION.

Philadelphia, July 5, 1821.

The following work, although more fair and candid, in most particulars, than the generality of those published in Europe respecting this country, contains some important errors and misstatements, which have called forth various animadversions in different parts of the United States. The American editor hopes he has performed an acceptable service to his fellow citizens, by presenting, in a condensed form, the most important of those animadversions, with such interlocutory remarks as appeared necessary to connect and illustrate them.

A NARRATIVE,

&c. &c. &c.

LETTER I.

H. M. Ship ——, May 31st, 1814.

HERE we are, at anchor in the Garonne, and waiting for a favourable breeze to prosecute our voyage. That America is our destination we all know; but whether we are to proceed to Canada, or against some part of the United States, none but those at the head of affairs can tell. The secret, however, is one which cannot long be kept, because a few weeks will bring us so far on our way, as to enable every man to judge for himself. I shall not, therefore, weary your patience by idly guessing at what must so soon be a certainty, but shall rather endeavour, in the mean time, to amuse you with an account of our motions since the peace, particularly of our march through the southern parts of Gascony to our present floating quarters.

As soon as the white flag had been displayed from the citadel of Bayonne, the customary salutes fired by the garrison and the besieging army, and matters so far arranged as to permit a relaxation of the blockade, the thoughts of all were naturally employed in speculations as to their future destiny.

This employment, you will perceive, was the necessary consequence of the want of better. We saw, that where we were, at least, there was no longer any occasion for us, and many began to anticipate with dismay, the prospect of immediate reduction. There was, however, one chance left, and that depended upon the continuance of the war with America. England, it was argued, is now at peace with all the world, except this her most implacable enemy, against whom she has the justest cause of irritation; nor is it at all probable that she will let slip an opportunity so favourable of severely chastising her, for her perfidy and ingratitude. It was the general opinion, therefore, that a large proportion of the Peninsular army would be transported to the other side of the Atlantic, that the war would there be carried on with vigour, and that no terms of accommodation would be listened to, except such as a British general should dictate in the Republican Senate House. It has been often remarked, and not with greater frequency than justice, that men are extremely ready to believe what they wish to be true. A plan of operations,

therefore, so completely in consonance with the desire of those who trembled at the prospect of half-pay, was pronounced, first the most proper, and then the most likely thing in the world to be followed up; and the sole subject of inquiry soon was, which regiments might expect to be allotted for this service, and which would return home. For my own part, I from the first laid my account with being sent out, because the corps to which I belong had not suffered so much as many others in the war which was just closed. Nor, in the end, did I find myself deceived. There was a time, indeed, in which I began to waver, and though my doubts did not continue long in existence, it is nevertheless proper that I should say where they originated.

You are perhaps aware that on the conclusion of an armistice between the French and British armies, one of the conditions was, that the garrison of Bayonne should be permitted to forage to the extent of seven leagues from the town. This of course occasioned a scarcity of food for the horses, and it was deemed necessary, in consequence of that scarcity, to move part of the British force a day's march towards the rear. Now it had so happened that, among the rest of our conclusions, we had agreed that the troops destined for America would embark at Bourdeaux, those destined for England at Passage. Finding ourselves, there-

fore, proceeding in the direction of the latter place, and not being aware of the cause of this movement, we began to suspect that we had been premature in numbering ourselves among those portioned off for the trans-atlantic war. Our hopes, however, or fears, or perhaps, more properly speaking, a mixture of the two, did not last long, for we proceeded no further than a distance of fifteen miles before we halted; nor had we continued in that position many days, when an order arrived for us to retrace our steps, and to make the best of our way towards Bourdeaux.

I need not observe that the promulgation of this order was a full confirmation of our first opinion; and that we, who had began to dream of the society of fathers, sisters, wives, and friends, now looked forward with equal, if not greater satisfaction, to a renewal of the hardships and enjoyments of active warfare.

It was on the evening of the fourteenth that the route was received, and on the following morning, at day-break, we commenced our march. The country through which we moved, had nothing in itself, unconnected with past events, calculated in any extraordinary degree to attract attention.

Behind us, indeed, rose the Pyrenees in all their grandeur, forming, on that side, a noble boundary to the prospect; and on our left was the sea, a boundary different it is true in kind, but certainly not less grand and sublime. Excepting these two

extremities, however, there was nothing in the landscape on which the eye loved particularly to rest, because the country, though pretty enough, has none of that exquisite richness and luxuriance which I had been led to expect, as characteristic of the South of France. The houses, too, being all in a ruinous and dilapidated condition, reminded one more forcibly of the scenes of violence and outrage which had been lately acted among them, than of those ideas of rural contentment and innocence, which various tales and melo-dramas had taught us to associate, in our own minds, with the land of the vine.

Regarded, however, in connection with past events, the scene was indeed most interesting; though to a stranger fresh from England, a man, we will suppose, of retired and peaceful habits, I can readily imagine that it would have been productive of much pain; and that it would have drawn from him many ejaculations against the barbarities of war, and the cruelty of men towards one another. On each side of the road, in whatever direction we cast our eyes, and as far as our eyes could reach, we beheld cottages unroofed and in ruins, chateaux stripped of their doors and windows, gardens laid waste, the walls demolished, and the fruit trees cut down; whole plantations levelled, and vineyards trodden under foot. Here and there likewise, a redoubt or breast-work pre-

sented itself; while caps, broken firelocks, pieces of clothing and accoutrements scattered about in profusion, marked the spots where the strife had been most determined, and where many a fine fellow had met his fate. Our journey lay, in short, over a field of battle, so that the houses were not only thoroughly gutted, (to use a vulgar but most expressive phrase,) but for the most part were *riddled* with cannon shot. Round some of the largest, indeed, there was not a wall nor a tree, which did not present evident proofs of its having been converted into a temporary place of defence, while the deep ruts, in what had once been lawns and flower-gardens, showed that even their beauty did not protect them from being destroyed by the rude passage of heavy artillery.

Immediately beyond the village of Bedart, such spectacles were particularly frequent. It was here, you will recollect, that in the month of December last there was fighting for four days together; and I do assure you, that the number of little hillocks within our view, from under most of which legs, and arms were peeping up, as well as the other objects which I have attempted to describe, sufficiently attested the obstinacy with which the fighting had been maintained.

I repeat, that in the bosom of a man of peace, it is very conceivable that all this would have excited feelings exceedingly painful; in ours, how-

ever, such feelings were overborne by others much more powerful. If we gazed with peculiar interest upon one hovel more than another, it was because some of us had there maintained ourselves; if we endeavoured to count the number of shot-holes in any wall, or the breaks in any hedge, it was because we had stood behind them, when "the iron hail" fell thick and fast around us. Our thoughts, in short, had more of exultation in them than sorrow; for though now and then, when the name of a fallen comrade was mentioned, it was accompanied with a "poor fellow!" the conversation soon returned again to the exploits and hair breadth escapes of the survivors. On the whole, therefore, our march was one of deep interest and high excitement, feelings which did not entirely evaporate when we halted, about two hours after noon, at the village of Anglet.

As I am well aware, from experience, that persons who live quietly at home, can form no correct notions of the state of a country which is, or has lately been, the seat of war, I am inclined to flatter myself that you will pardon the tediousness of the above detail; and I am likewise willing to persuade myself, that a little further continuance of such matters, will not be unacceptable. The environs of a beleaguered town, in particular, are very difficult to be conceived without having been seen. It is true that every one understands, or believes

that he understands, what is meant by trenches, lines of circumvallation, and so forth, but these, after all, are no more than general terms, incapable of affording real information to any except a military reader. In attempting, therefore, to give you some idea of the aspect of things, in the immediate neighbourhood of Bayonne, I shall not pretend to draw a plan, in words, of the city itself, with its defences and out-works; nor yet of the several posts occupied by the different divisions of the besieging army. For all this I refer you to the public prints, where you will find it much better told, than, with my opportunities of observation, I could possibly tell it. I would rather describe to you the condition of a single hamlet, minutely and particularly; because it is exactly in such minute particulars that you must be least informed.

For this purpose I will take the village of Anglet, the place where we this day pitched our tents, and which, during the continuance of hostilities, was a post of vital importance. It is distant about a mile and a half, or two miles from the advanced works of Bayonne, and stands upon the high road from Madrid to Paris, which runs through the middle of that city. Along this road all the supplies for the left of our army were brought up, consequently a sally made in this direction, and with success, might have been productive, to us, of much mischief. To guard against such an occur-

rence, due care was bestowed upon fortifying and strengthening the post. About one hundred yards in front of the village, felled trees were thrown across the road with their branches towards the town, forming what we call an abattis. Forty or fifty yards in rear of this, a ditch was dug and a breast-work thrown up, behind which a party might securely stand and do great execution with their fire, upon any body of men struggling to force their way through the thick branches. On each side of the road, again, where the ground gradually rises into little eminences, were erected redoubts and batteries, from which a heavy flanking fire might be kept up; whilst every house in the village itself, which, by the way, are built in a straggling manner, and at considerable distances from one another, was loop-holed, and converted into a temporary fortress; the church, in particular, being on higher ground than the other buildings, was completely metamorphosed, from a mansion of peace, into a little citadel. Strong palings, called in military phraseology, stockades, were driven into the ground round the church-yard, from openings in which some pieces of light artillery showed themselves. The walls of the edifice itself were strengthened by an embankment of earth to the height of four or five feet, above which narrow openings were made, in order to give its defenders an opportunity of levelling their

muskets; whilst within, the pulpit was filled with barrels of gunpowder, and the space enclosed by the rails of the altar, used as a magazine for shot and shells.

I have been thus minute in my description of Anglet, because what I have said of it will apply equally well to every village, hamlet, or cluster of houses within the compass of what are called the lines. On this side, you will perceive, there was no intention of making a breach, or of storming the place; nor, indeed, would it have been advisable to attempt it, excepting in one point, and that on the opposite side of the town. The sole object of these preparations, therefore, was to keep the enemy within their works, and to cut them off from all communication with the surrounding country. But where troops are every moment in danger of being attacked, as must be the case with all besieging armies, the slightest cover and the most trifling defence is of importance. You may, therefore, figure to yourself what appearance a country must present, which, to the extent of fifteen or twenty miles round, is thus treated; where every cottage is fortified, the most valuable timber cut down to form abattis, every eminence crowned with more regular works, and every place swarming with armed men. Such was its aspect during the day, whilst at night it exhibited a spectacle not less striking. Then, in whatever direction you might

turn your eyes, they would be sure to rest upon parts of a huge circle of fires; and if you chanced to be standing behind one of them, you might witness chairs, tables, bedsteads, or any other pieces of household furniture which lay nearest at hand, thrown on, with all the indifference in the world, to increase the blaze.

The condition of the inhabitants of this district, was, as you may suppose, exceedingly wretched. Most of them, indeed, had fled on the advance of the British, and left their houses and effects to the conquerors; some, however, remained, and though they were certainly treated with all the humanity possible, under such circumstances, it must be confessed that their sufferings were great. In the first place they were necessarily deprived of all the comforts of home; their houses were filled with soldiers, and if one little apartment were assigned to the whole family, they might consider themselves as extremely fortunate. In the next place they were compelled to witness the destruction of their property, and to bear with patience many insults from the common soldiers. I need not say that no British officer was ever guilty of insulting them, and that, whenever a complaint was made of one of the privates, the matter was fully examined into, and if the story was found to be correct, the soldier was instantly punished. But I believe that they put up with many injuries rather than com-

plain, through a dread of the consequences which might result, from the anger and revenge of the man whom they should bring to punishment.

Besides these two inconveniences, they must have lived in a constant state of terror and alarm. In case of a successful sortie from the town, they knew that they would be put to death by their own countrymen, for remaining in their houses to receive the English; whilst upon their present protectors they could not rest implicit confidence, seeing that they were bound to them by no ties of alliance or kindred. They could never, then, be free from apprehension, of some sort or other, nor is it easy to imagine any feeling more distressing than that of continual dread. It is true that no article of food was taken from them, without their receiving in lieu of it considerably more than its full value; and it is likewise true that when they became better acquainted with the intruders, they were frequently invited to partake of the soldier's messes; but these were trifling advantages, and by no means sufficient to compensate for the mischiefs by which they were accompanied.

I am not one of those who love to evince their sensibility by mourning over unavoidable evils; neither, indeed, would it be consistent with my present views and profession so to do; but in truth I cannot help observing, that war, when stripped of its parade and excitement, and softened down

by all the alleviating circumstances of which it is capable, is a fearful thing. One experiences no regret at seeing the most splendid mansion consumed to ashes, provided it be set on fire by our own shells, and to dislodge the enemy; one has no reluctance in treading down corn-fields, destroying orchards, and ruining in one day the labour of months, as long as the hurry and madness of a battle continue. But when this has died away, and the calmness of repose returns, he who can look with indifference upon the ravages which he has himself contributed to produce, must be either more or less than man. I beg, however, that you will not take fright, or imagine that I am going into a strain of prosing. Nature has not gifted me with any great turn that way, and if she had, I at present want the inclination to exercise it. One only remark, however, I beg leave to make, a remark which has been often made by much wiser men, that old England, if she were but properly aware of it, has more cause of sincere thankfulness than any nation in Europe. It is true that our countrymen have suffered, and are still suffering in their purses; and it is unquestionable, that to part with our money, and to deny ourselves luxuries to which we have all our lives been accustomed, are, in themselves, no slight grievances. But if they who complain so bitterly of taxation, could but experience for a short time the real

misery of having a war brought home to their own doors, I am mistaken if they would not desire to buy it away again, at double the price of the present burthens. Depend upon it, that all your grumblers are men devoid either of reflection or principle; in which of the two they are deficient, I leave you to judge.

But I find that, in spite of my promise to the contrary, I am actually getting into a moralizing strain as fast as I can. To prevent its continuance I shall here break off, promising to renew my journal, with more facts and fewer observations, in my next letter.

LETTER II.

June 21st, 1814.

AS soon as the bustle of encamping was over, and my time absolutely at my own disposal, I took advantage of an offered passport, and proceeded into Bayonne. You will readily believe that I entered this city with feelings very different from those of a common traveller. Having lain before it as a besieger for upwards of two months, its shops, its trade, its public buildings and places of amusement were to me objects of, comparatively speaking, little interest or curiosity. Its fortifications and means of defence were, in truth, what I was principally anxious to examine. Hitherto I could judge of them only from outward appearances and vague reports: and now that an opportunity was offered of so doing with greater accuracy, I confess that my inclination prompted me to embrace that opportunity, rather than to hunt for pictures which I could not value, or fatigue my imagination by endeavouring to discover fine specimens of architecture, amid heavy and ill-built churches.

But I have already pledged myself, nor do I mean to withdraw that pledge, to attempt no military description of this important city. To do so with

exactness, and at the same time to render the description intelligible, and what is still more difficult, interesting to a man of peace, is a task to which I acknowledge myself incompetent. Yet to pass it by with the observation that it was as strong as the nature of the ground, and the labour of man could make it, is not, I am inclined to believe, what you would desire. I shall therefore endeavour to steer a middle course, by giving you something like a general idea of the whole, avoiding, at the same time, as much as possible, all technical terms, and prolix details.

The city of Bayonne stands, as every body knows, upon the Adour, about six or eight miles from the point where that river falls into the sea. On the southern or Spanish bank, where the whole of the city, properly so called, is built, the country, to the distance of two or three miles from the walls, is perfectly flat, and the soil sandy, and apparently not very productive. On the opposite bank the ground rises rather abruptly from the brink of the stream, sloping upwards likewise from the sea, till you arrive at the pinnacle upon which the citadel is erected, and which hangs immediately over the town. Thus, though the Adour in fact separates the city from the suburbs and citadel, yet as the ramparts of the former extend to the water's edge on both sides, and as those of the latter continue the sweep from points immediately opposite, the general appear-

ance presented is, that of one considerable town, with a broad river flowing through the middle of it.

You will perceive, even from this short and imperfect sketch, that its very situation gives to Bayonne a superiority over most cities; inasmuch as it affords peculiar facilities towards rendering it a place of great strength. On one side there is a plain, always accounted by engineers the most convenient for the construction of fortifications; on the other an eminence, lofty enough to command the surrounding country, and at the same time sufficiently level at the summit to receive the walls of a fortress, powerful at once from its position and regularity. But the great strength of Bayonne is owing, not more to its original defences than to the numerous out-works which have lately been added to it. It was along the course of the Adour, you will remember, or rather between the Adour and the Nieve, that Soult formed his famous intrenched camp. The right of this chain of stupendous works rested upon the city, the importance of which was consequently much increased; and as the capture of it would have occasioned, not only the loss of a town, but the turning of the whole position, no pains were spared in rendering it as nearly impregnable as possible. To give you some notion of the nature of these works I will describe the aspect which they presented to myself, as I rode from Anglet towards the city. When

I had proceeded about a mile and a half beyond our advanced posts, I found myself in front of the first line of defence. This consisted of a battery mounting three eighteen pounders, upon the road, flanked by others on each side ; so placed as that whichsoever of them should be attacked, it would be defended by a cross fire from all the rest. These were of course, additionally strengthened by ditches, and felled trees ; but they were open in the rear ; and though very formidable to an assailing party, yet, when taken, could have been of small service to the conquerors, being themselves exposed to the fire of the second line. The situation of this second line again, was similar in every respect to that of the first, being like it, open in the rear, and placed under the guns of the town. Thus after having forced two powerful lines of defence, the besiegers would find themselves almost as far as ever from the attainment of their object, being then only arrived at the point, where the labours of a siege could commence.

But the maintenance of Bayonne altogether depends upon keeping possession of the citadel. As the city lies upon a plain, and that fort stands upon an eminence immediately above it, it is clear that were this taken, Bayonne must either surrender, or be speedily reduced to ruins. It is true that, by destroying the bridge which connects them, all communication between the two places would be

cut off; but the distance from the one to the other being not more than half-musket shot, and the guns of the fort pointing directly down upon the streets and houses of the city, any attempt to hold out could cause only the destruction of the town, and the unavenged slaughter of its garrison. Of the truth of this the French were, of course, as much aware as their enemies, nor did they neglect any means which an accurate knowledge of engineering could point out, for the defence of what they justly considered as the key of the entire position. In addition to its own very regular and well constructed fortifications, two strong redoubts were throwu up, on two sides of the fort, upon the only spots of ground calculated for the purpose; both of which, I was informed by my guide, were undermined and loaded with gunpowder, ready to be sprung as soon as they should fall into our hands. They had judged, and judged correctly, that if ever the place should be invested, it would be here that the trenches would be opened, and the breaching batteries erected; and they consequently made every preparation to meet the danger, which great prudence and military skill could suggest.

Bayonne, though a populous place, does not cover so much ground as one would be led to suppose. Like most walled towns, its streets, with the exception of one or two, are in general narrow,

and the houses lofty; but it is compact, and, on the whole, clean and neatly built. The number of inhabitants, I should be inclined to estimate at somewhere about thirty thousand, exclusive of the garrison, which at this time amounted to fourteen or fifteen thousand men: but as most of the families appear to live in the style of those in the old town of Edinburgh, that is to say, several under the same roof, though each in a separate story, or flat, it is not difficult to conceive how they contrive to find sufficient room, within a compass apparently so narrow. Of its commerce and manufactures I can say little, except that I should not imagine either to be extensive. I am led to form this opinion, partly from having seen no shipping at the wharfs, and partly because the Adour, though here both wide and deep, is rendered unnavigable to vessels of any size, by a shallow, or bar at its mouth. There was indeed, a sloop of war close to the town, but how it got there I am at a loss to conceive, unless it were built upon the river, and constantly kept there, as an additional protection against a surprise from the water. The shops are, however, good, particularly those where jewellery is sold; an article in the setting and adorning of which the French, if they do not exceed us in really substantial value, undoubtedly surpass us in elegance.

When I had taken as complete a survey of the town as I felt disposed to take, I crossed the bridge

with the intention of inspecting the interior of the citadel. Here, however, I was disappointed, no strangers being admitted within its gates; but as there was no objection made to my reconnoitring it from without, I proceeded towards the point where our trenches had been dug, and where it had been designed to breach and storm the place. To this I was urged by two motives, partly from the desire of obtaining the best view possible of the fort, and partly that I might examine the ground upon which the desperate affair of the 14th of April took place. You will recollect, that some hours before day-light in the morning of that day, a vigorous and well-arranged sortie was made by the garrison, and that it was not without hard fighting and a severe loss on both sides, that they were finally repulsed.

Mounting the heights, therefore, I soon arrived at St. Etienne, a little village nearly on a level with the citadel, and not more than half a mile from its walls. From this point I could satisfy my curiosity to the full, and as the account may not, perhaps, be uninteresting, I shall describe as well as I am able, the scene which here met my eyes.

The ridge of little hills, upon which the fort and village are built, though it rises by gentle gradation from the sea, towards the spot where I now stood, is nevertheless interrupted and broken here and there with deep glens or ravines. Two of these

glens, one to the right, the other to the left, chance to occur immediately under the ramparts of the fortress, supplying, in some measure, the purposes of a ditch, and leaving a sort of table or elevated neck of land between them, the extremity of which is occupied by the village. On this neck of land the besieged had constructed one of the redoubts which I mentioned as having been lately thrown up, whilst on another table, at the opposite side of the left ravine, which winds round in the direction of the wall, as nearly as if it were the work of art, stands the other redoubt. Beyond this again, there is a perpendicular precipice, the hills there abruptly ending: so that on two sides the walls of the fort skirt the extremity of a bare rock. It was along the outer ridges of these ravines, and through the church-yard of St. Etienne, that our trenches were drawn, the village itself being the most advanced British post; and it was along these ridges, and in the street of this village, that the action of the 14th of April was fought.

It is not my business, neither indeed is it my intention, to relate the particulars of that affair. The French, you will remember, having contrived, in a dark night, to elude the vigilance of our sentinels, came upon the piquets unperceived, and took them completely by surprise. The battle was maintained on both sides with great determination, and had it not been for the unfortunate capture of

Sir John Hope, and the fall of General Hay, the assailants would have had little cause to rejoice at the result: for though the loss of the English was certainly great, that of the French was at least not inferior. Yet the business was an unfortunate one to both parties, since before it took place, Buonaparte had already abdicated, and the preliminaries of peace were already signed between the two nations.

I found the village, in which the fighting had been most obstinately maintained, in the condition of most villages where such dramas have been acted. The street had been barricaded, but the barricade was almost entirely torn down; the houses, trees, and church, like those we had passed upon the march, were covered with the marks of cannon and musket balls, whilst quantities of round and grape shot, of musket and pistol bullets, broken bayonets, swords, &c. &c. lay scattered about in every direction. Nor were these the only evidences of strife discernible. In many places,—on the pavement of the street, in the church yard, but above all, on the floor of the church itself,—the traces of blood were still distinctly visible. Beside the remains of the barricade, there stood a solitary six pounder, which had been taken and re-taken nine times during the struggle; and I assure you that a sprinkling of what looked like a mixture of blood and brains upon its carriage and breech,

showed that it had never been given up without the most desperate resistance. The mounds, too, under which the dead were buried, presented a peculiarly striking appearance, for the field of action having been narrow, those that fell, fell in heaps together, and being buried in the same way, one was led to form an idea of greater slaughter, than if double the number of graves had been distinquishable in a more extended space.

Having now accomplished my wishes as far as I could, and beginning to feel somewhat fatigued with strolling about, I adjourned to an hotel in the city, from whence, in the evening, I went to the play. The house was poor, and the performance miserable, consequently there was no great inducement to sit out the whole of the piece. After witnessing an act or two, therefore, I returned to the inn, where I slept, and at an early hour next morning, rejoined my regiment, already under arms and making preparations for the continuance of the march.

As it would have been considerably out of our way to go round by the floating bridge,* permis-

* The bridge here alluded to was thrown across the Adour by Lord Wellington, at the commencement of the siege. It was composed of a number of small fishing vessels fastened together with cords, and planked from one to another, the whole firmly moored about three miles below Bayonne. Whether the

sion was applied for and granted, to pass directly through Bayonne. With bayonets fixed, therefore, band playing, and colours flying, we marched along the streets of that city; a large proportion of the garrison being drawn up to receive us, and the windows crowded with spectators, male and female, eager to behold the troops from whom, not long ago, they probably had expected a visit of a very different nature. The scene was certainly remarkable enough, and the transition from animosity to good will, as singular as it was sudden; nor do I imagine that it would be easy to define the sensations of either party, on being thus strangely brought in contact with the other. The females, indeed, waved their handkerchiefs, whilst we bowed and kissed our hands; but I thought I could discover something like a suppressed scowl, upon the countenances of the military. Certain it is, that in whatever light the new state of affairs may be regarded by the great bulk of the nation, with the army it is by no means popular; and at this time they appeared to consider the passage of British troops through their lines, as the triumphal entrance of a victorious enemy.

As soon as we had cleared the entrenchments of Bayonne, and got beyond the limits of the allied

daringness of the attempt, or the difficulties surmounted in its completion, be considered, the construction of this bridge may be looked upon as one of the most extraordinary actions of that extraordinary man.

camps, we found ourselves in a country more peaceful and more picturesque, than any we had yet met with. There were here no signs of war, or marks of violence. The cottages were covered with honeysuckle and roses, the gardens were blooming in the most perfect order; the corn was growing in great plenty and richness, and the vines were clustering round their poles like the hops in the gardens in Kent. It is impossible to describe the feeling of absolute refreshment, which such a sight stirred up in one who, for so long a time, had looked upon nothing but ruin and devastation. It is true that with respect to grandeur, or even beauty, the scenery through which I now travelled was not to be compared with the sublime passes of the Pyrenees, or with many other spots which I had beheld; but I confess that an hamlet uninjured and tenanted by its own rude peasantry, a field of Indian corn exhibiting no wasteful track of foragers, nay a single cottage with its flowers and ever-greens budding around it, was at this time a more welcome object to my eyes, than the wildest mountains, or most romantic valley, displaying no habitations except white tents, and no inhabitants except soldiers. I felt, in short, as if I had once more returned into the bosom of civilized and domestic life, after having been for many months a wanderer and a savage.

The road along which we proceeded had been

made by Napoleon, and was remarkably good. It was sheltered, on each side, from the rays of the sun, by groves of cork trees mingled with fir; by which means, though the day was overpoweringly hot, we did not suffer so much as we should otherwise have done. Our march was, therefore, exceedingly agreeable, and we came in, about noon, very little fatigued, to the village of Ondres, where the tents were pitched, and we remained till the morrow.

LETTER III.

The dawn was just beginning to appear, when the bugles sounded, and the tents were struck. For the first few leagues, our route to-day resembled that of yesterday, in almost every particular. There was the same appearance of peaceful quiet, the same delightful intermingling of woods, corn-fields, vineyards, and pasture; but we had not proceeded far, when a marked difference was perceptible; every step we trod, the soil became more and more sandy, the cultivation less frequent, and the wood more abundant, till at last we found ourselves marching through the heart of an immense forest of pines. We had diverged, it appeared, from the main road, which carries the traveller through a rich and open country, and were pursuing another through the middle of those deserts and savannahs which lie towards the coast, a district known by the name of *les Landes*. There was something, if not beautiful, at least new and striking, in the scenery now around us. Wherever the eye turned, it was met by one wide waste of gloomy pine-trees; diversified now and then, by the unexpected appearance of a modest hamlet, which looked as if it were the

abode of some newly arrived settlers, in a country hitherto devoid of human habitations.

Were I to continue the detail of a long march through these barren regions, I should soon fatigue, without amusing you; I shall therefore content myself with observing, that day after day the same dreary prospect presented itself, varied by the occasional occurrence of huge uncultivated plains, which apparently chequer the forest, at certain intervals, with spots of stunted and unprofitable pasturage; upon these there were usually flocks of sheep grazing, in the mode of watching which, the peasants fully evinced the truth of the old proverb, that necessity is the mother of invention. I do not know whether the practice to which I allude be generally known, but as it struck me as very remarkable, I shall offer no apology for relating it.

You must observe, that the whole of this district is a perfect flat, containing scarcely a knoll or eminence of any sort, as far as the eye can reach. In addition to this, the vast plains where the sheep are fed, many of which extend two or three leagues in every direction, produce not so much as a fir tree, by climbing which, a man might see to any of its extremities: and the consequence is, that the shepherds are constantly in danger of losing their sheep, as one loses sight of a vessel at sea, in the distance. To remedy this evil, they have fallen

upon a plan not more simple than ingenious; they all walk upon stilts, exactly similar to those with which our school-boys amuse themselves; the only difference is, that whereas the school-boys' stilts are seldom raised above ten or twelve inches from the ground, those of the French peasants are elevated to the height of six or eight feet.

When we first caught a glimpse of these figures, it was in the dusk of the morning; for a while, we were willing to persuade ourselves that the haze had deceived us, by seeming to enlarge bodies beyond their real dimensions; but when we looked at the trees, we saw them in their own proper size, nor could we suppose that the atmosphere would have effect upon one object, which it had not upon another; yet there appeared to be no other way of accounting for the phenomenon, unless indeed this wild country was the parent of a race of giants, for the men whom we saw resembled moving towers rather than mortals. I need not observe that our astonishment was very great; nor in fact was it much diminished when, on a nearer approach, we discovered the truth, and witnessed the agility with which they moved, and the ease with which they would stoop to the ground, pick up the smallest article, and stand upright again. But if we admired the skill of one or two individuals, our admiration rose to a still higher pitch, when we saw crowds of them together, all equally skilful; till they in-

formed us that the thing was not an amusement, but universally practised for the purpose I have stated.

Besides this, I know nothing in the customs of this isolated people at all worthy of notice, unless, indeed, it be their method of supplying themselves with lights. Being completely cut off from the rest of the world, it is not in their power, except when once or twice a year they travel to the nearest towns with their wool, to purchase candles; and, as they have no notion how these can be made, they substitute in their room a lamp fed with the turpentine extracted from the fir trees. The whole process is simple and primitive: to obtain the turpentine, they cut a hole in the tree, and fasten a dish in it to catch the sap as it oozes through; and as soon as the dish is filled, they put a wick of cotton into the midst of the liquor, and burn it as we do a lamp; the light, indeed, is not of the most brilliant nature, but it is at least better than none; and, as they have fir trees in abundance within their reach, there is no danger of their oil being quickly exhausted.

But I begin to apprehend, that if these minute details continue much longer, you will be as much tired in perusing the account of this march, as I was in its performance. Permit me, then, to hurry over the following week, during the whole course of which the same scenery and ad-

ventures occurred; and to carry you forward to the morning of the twenty-third, when at last we began to emerge from the forests, and to find ourselves once again in a more open country. At first, however, it cannot be said that, with respect to beauty, the change was greatly for the better. Upon the borders of the deserts, there is a little village called Le Barp, where we spent the night of the twenty-second; from whence, till you arrive at a place called Belle-Vue, the country is exactly in that state which land assumes when nature has begun to lose ground, and art to gain it—when the wild simplicity of the one is destroyed, and the rich luxuriance of the other has not yet been superinduced. So far, therefore, we proceeded, regretting, rather than rejoicing that we had quitted the woods; but no sooner had we attained that point, than there burst upon us, all on a sudden, a prospect as gloriously fertile as ever delighted the eyes of a weary traveller.

Instead of boundless forests of pine, the whole face of the country was now covered with vineyards, interspersed, in the most exquisite and tasteful manner, with corn-fields and meadows of the richest pasturage. Nor was there any deficiency of timber; a well-wooded chateau, with its lawn and plantations, here and there presenting itself, while quiet hamlets and solitary cottages, scattered in great abundance over the scene, gave

to it an appearance of life and prosperity, exceedingly bewitching. Had there been but the addition of a fine river flowing through the midst of it, and had the ground been somewhat more broken into hill and dale, I should have pronounced it the most enchanting prospect of the kind I had ever beheld; but, unfortunately, both these were wanting. Though the effect of a first view, therefore, was striking and delightful, and though to the last one could not help acknowledging the richness of the land and its high state of cultivation, its beauty soon began to pall. The fact is, that an immense plain, however adorned by the labour of man, is not an object upon which it is pleasing to gaze for any length of time; the eye becomes wearied with the extent of its own stretch, and as there is no boundary but the horizon, the imagination is left to picture a continuance of the same plain, till it becomes as tired of fancying as the eye is of looking. Besides, we were not long in discovering that the vineyards were unworthy to be compared, in point of luxuriant appearance, with those of Spain and the more southern regions of France. In this neighbourhood, the vine is not permitted to grow to a greater heighth than three or four feet from the ground; whereas in Spain, and on the borders, it climbs, like the hop-plant in England, to the top of high poles, and hangs over from one row to another, in the most graceful festoons. In spite of

these objections, however, no one could do otherwise than admit, that the change we had experienced was agreeable, and we continued to move on with greater alacrity, till it was evident, from the increasing number of seats and villas, that we were rapidly approaching the vicinity of Bourdeaux.

Nor was it long before the towers and buildings of that magnificent city began to be discernible in the distance. Prompted by I know not what impulse, we almost involuntarily quickened our pace at the sight, and in a short time reached the suburbs, which, like those of most French towns, are composed of low houses, inhabited by the poorest and meanest of the people. Here we halted for a few minutes to refresh the men, when having again resumed the line of march, we advanced under a magnificent triumphal arch, originally erected in honour of Napoleon, but now inscribed with the name of the Duke D'Angouleme, and ornamented with garlands of flowers. Passing under this, we proceeded along one or two handsome streets, till we reached the Military Hospital, a large and commodious structure, fitted up for the reception of several thousands of sick, where it was arranged that we should spend the night.

The city of Bourdeaux has been too often described, and is too well known to you and to the rest of my countrymen, to render any particular account of it at all necessary from me; and were the case

even otherwise, I confess that my opportunities of examining it were not sufficient to authorize my entering upon such an attempt. The whole extent of our sojourn, was only during the remainder of that day (and it was past noon before we got in) and the ensuing night; a space of time which admitted of no more than a hurried stroll through some of the principal streets, and a hasty visit to such public buildings as are considered most worthy of attention. The palace of the Duke D'Angouleme, the Military Hospital, the Theatre, and the Cathedral, are all remarkably fine of their kind; while the public gardens, the Exchange, and fashionable promenades, are inferior only to those of Paris itself.

But, perhaps, you will be inclined to think, that had my opportunities been ever so great, and my talent for description ever so lively, I might on the present occasion be spared the proof of the one, and the exhibition of the other; nay, it is very probable, that you will not read even thus far, without being disposed to remind me, that my journal was promised to be one, not of a progress through the South of France, but of the campaigns in America. Let me conclude, then, that you will be satisfied to consult some other tourist, for a complete description of this metropolis of the southern provinces, and in the mean time to follow me, whilst I endeavour, in as few words as possible, to run

over a detail of the remainder of our journey towards the shipping.

At an early hour next morning, we were again in motion, and proceeded to an extensive common, near the village of Macau, about three leagues from Bourdeaux, where we found a considerable force already assembled. Judging from the number of tents upon the heath, I conceive that there could not be fewer than eight or ten thousand men, the whole of whom we naturally concluded were destined for the same service with ourselves. The sight was at once pleasing and encouraging, because there could be no doubt that such a power, ably commanded, would carry every thing before it.

In this situation we continued, without the occurrence of any incident deserving of notice, till the 27th, when an order arrived for the officers to dispose of their horses without delay. This, as you may suppose, was done at an enormous loss: and, on the morning of the 28th, we set forward towards the point of embarkation. But, alas! in the numbers allotted for the trans-atlantic war, we found ourselves grievously disappointed, since, instead of the whole division, only two regiments, neither of them very strong, were directed to move; it was not our business, however, to question the wisdom of any measure adopted by our superiors, and we accordingly

marched on in as high spirits, as if we had been followed by the entire Peninsular army.

The remainder of our journey occupied two days, nor do I ever remember to have spent a similar space of time with greater satisfaction; our route lay through some of the most fertile districts in France, passing Chateau Margaux, famous for its wine, with other places not inferior to it either in richness of soil, or in beauty of prospect. The weather was delightful, and the grapes, though not yet ripe, were hanging in heavy bunches from the vines, giving promise of much wealth to come; the hay season had commenced, and numerous groupes of happy-looking peasants were busy in every field; in short, it was a march upon which I shall never look back without pleasure.

The close of the first day's progress brought us to a village called La Moe, beautifully situated within view of the majestic waters of the Garonne. Here, for the first time since we quitted Bayonne, were we quartered upon the inhabitants; a measure, which the loss of our tents rendered necessary. They received us with so much frankness, and treated us with so much civility, I had almost said kindness, that it was not without a feeling of something like regret, that we parted from them. The second day carried us to Pauliac, an inconsiderable town upon the banks of the same river, where we

found boats ready to convey us to the shipping, which lay at anchor to receive us.

To embark the troops in these boats. and to huddle them on board two dirty little transports, occupied some time, and the provoking part of the business was, that all this trouble was to be gone through again. The men of war, in which we were to cross the Atlantic, could not come up so high for want of water; and on this account it was that these transports were sent as passage boats to carry us to them. The wind however was foul, and blew so strong, that the masters would not venture to hoist a sail: consequently we were obliged to endure the misery of a crowd in a small vessel for two nights and a day; nor was it till past noon on the 31st, that we were finally settled in His Majesty's ship ———— of 64 guns.

Having now arrived at the point from whence, perhaps, I ought more properly to have set out, I am unwilling to occupy your time by comparisons between the Garonne and the Thames, or even by an account of the scenery visible from the deck of the ship. I would rather enter at once into my proper subject, by detailing the particulars of the force, both military and naval, which composes this expedition; but, as my letter has already swelled to rather an uncommon bulk, I shall defer this relation till another opportunity, which I am not likely to be without during the idleness and tædium of a long voyage.

LETTER IV.

IN the leisure which I anticipated during the voyage, I have not been disappointed; nor do I conceive that it can be better occupied than in fulfilling the promise made in my last, of describing to you the nature and number of the force employed upon the present expedition; as well as in relating some of the most interesting events which have occurred during our progress towards the place of our destination.

The land army, then, is composed of three battalions of infantry, the 4th, 44th, and 85th regiments; the two former mustering each about eight hundred bayonets, the last not more than six hundred. In addition to these, there are two officers of engineers, a brigade of artillery, a detachment of sappers and miners, a party of artillery drivers, with a due proportion of officers belonging to the Medical and Commissariat departments. The whole together cannot be computed at more than two thousand five hundred men, if indeed it amounts to so great a number; and is under the command of Major General Ross, a very gallant and experienced leader.

The fleet, again, consist of the Royal Oak, of 74 guns, bearing the flag of Rear Admiral Malcombe; the Diadem and Dictator, two sixty-fours, armed en flute, the Pomone, Menelaus, Trave, Weser, and Thames, frigates, the three last armed in the same manner as the Diadem and Dictator; the Meteor and Devastation, bomb vessels; together with one or two gun brigs; making, in all, a squadron of eleven or twelve ships of war, with several store ships and transports.

On board the Royal Oak are embarked the General, with his staff, and the artillery; the Trave and Weser are filled with the 4th; the 44th are divided between the Dictator and the Thames, in the first of which ships are also the Engineers; the 85th occupies the Diadem; and the rest are scattered through the fleet, partly in the men of war, and partly in the transports.

As soon as the troops were finally settled, with all the baggage, and the vessels allotted for their accommodation, the signal was made to weigh; but the wind being adverse, and the navigation of the Garonne far from simple, it could not be obeyed with safety. Every thing, therefore, remained quiet till the evening of the 2d of June, when the gale moderating a little, the anchors were raised, and the sails hoisted. The tide was beginning to ebb when this was done, favoured by which the ships drifted gradually on their course; but

before long, the breeze shifting, blew directly in their sterns, when they stood gallantly to sea, clearing the river before dark; and, as there was no lull during the whole of the night, by day-break the coast of France was not to be discerned. All was now one wide waste of waters, as far as the eye could reach, bounded on every side by the distant horizon; a scene, which, though at first it must strike with awe and wonder a person unaccustomed to it, soon becomes insipid, and even wearisome, from its constant sameness.

It is not my design to amuse you with an account of the various expedients adopted by landsmen on board of ships to kill time, neither do I suppose that you would thank me for a transcript of the log-book, relative to the changes in the weather and the rate of sailing. I shall only observe, therefore, that with few interruptions, the fair wind that carried us out of the Garonne, did not leave us till the nineteenth, when, by calculating the ship's situation, it appeared that the Azores, or Western Islands, could not be very distant. Nor, as it turned out, were these calculations incorrect; for, on ascending the deck next morning, the first object that met our eyes was the high land of St. Michael's, rising, like a collection of blue clouds, out of the water. With such a prospect before us, you may imagine our consternation, when we found ourselves deserted by the breeze which had hitherto

so uniformly favoured us, and lying as motionless as logs, under the influence of a dead calm. Our voyage was certainly not to be compared to that of Nearchus among the ancients, of Columbus in the middles ages, nor yet to those of Cooke or Anson in more modern times, but it had been long enough to produce an hearty dislike to the confinement of a ship, and a strong desire to be once more on terra firma. Under these circumstances, the delay of even a single day might be looked upon as no slight misery, by men who had laid their account with reaching a friendly port within a few hours; and you may be assured, that many bitter complaints against the inconstancy of the weather, sufficiently attested that such was the point of view in which it was regarded.

But the injustice of these complaints were soon evident, for before mid-day the breeze freshened again, sending us every moment nearer to the object of our wishes. As soon as we contrived to double the projecting head-land, which had attracted our attention in the morning, our course became one of much interest and pleasure. We had now neared the shore considerably, and were moving at a rate sufficiently rapid to prevent further repining, and at the same time slow enough to permit a distinct and calm survey of the beach, with the numerous villages, seats, and convents, that adorned it.

The island of St. Michael is mountainous, even to the very edge of the water, but the heights, though lofty, do not present a rugged or barren appearance. Here and there, indeed, bare rocks push themselves into notice, but in general the ascent is easy, and the hills are covered, to the tops, with groves of orange trees and beautiful green pasturage. Like other Portuguese settlements, this island abounds in religious houses, the founders of many of which do not appear to have been deficient in taste, when they pitched upon situations for building. There was one of these that particularly struck me: it stood upon a sort of platform, or terrace, about half way between the sea and the summit of the mountain; above it were hanging woods, whether natural or artificial I cannot say, interrupted now and then by projecting rocks; and round it were plantations of orange trees, loaded with fruit, and interspersed with myrtles, and other odoriferous shrubs. Being greatly pleased with the mansion and the surrounding scenery, I naturally enquired from the pilot (for one had already come off to us) as to its use, and the quality of its owner; and from him I learnt that it was a convent, I forget of what order, a piece of intelligence which was soon confirmed by the sound of bells distinctly audible as we passed.

In this manner we continued to coast along, being seldom at a greater distance than four or five

miles from the land, till we came opposite to a small town called Villa Franca. Here, as the wind threatened to die away, several others and myself agreed to go on shore; a boat was accordingly lowered, and we pushed off from the ship; but the operation of landing did not prove to be altogether so simple as we had expected. An immense reef of rocks, some under water, others barely above it, but none distinguishable till we had almost run against them, opposed our progress; and it was not without considerable difficulty, and the assistance of the country people, who made signals to us from the beach, that we contrived to discover a narrow channel, leading up to the strand.

Having at length so far attained our wishes, as to tread once more upon firm ground, the next thing to be done was to find out some inn, or house of public entertainment, where we might pass the night, a measure which the increasing darkness rendered necessary. In this, however, we were disappointed, as the town of Villa Franca could boast of no such convenience on any scale. But we were not on that account obliged to bivouac; for the Hidalgo, or mayor of the place, politely insisted upon our accompanying him home, and entertained us with great hospitality; and, in truth, we had no cause to regret the unsuccessful issue of our inquiries, since, independent of the good cheer with which we were presented, our host, being an

intelligent person, did not fail to render himself an agreeable companion; and what contributed in no slight degree to the facility of our intercourse was, that though he assured us he had never quitted St. Michael's in his life, he spoke English with the fluency of a native. Among other pieces of information, we learnt from him, that the reef which impeded our progress towards the land, had formerly been an island; it appeared, he affirmed, one morning, in the most sudden and extraordinary manner, as if it had been thrown up by an earthquake during the night, and having continued so long above water, as to embolden a single family of fishers to settle upon it, it disappeared again as suddenly as it had come, leaving no trace of its existence, except the rocks which we had found so troublesome. Whether there be truth in this story, I cannot pretend to determine; and yet I see no reason to doubt the word of a man of respectability, who could have no motive whatever for deceiving us. But this was not all that we learnt from him respecting this reef: he declared, that previous to the appearance of the island, the water, in that very spot, was unfathomable; and it was not till after it had sunk, that a single rock stood in the way to prevent the largest ship of war from anchoring within a stone's throw of the beach.

Finding our new acquaintance so civil and

obliging, we naturally informed him of our intention to proceed next morning to Ponta del Gada, the principal town in St. Michael's, and requested his assistance in procuring some mode of conveyance; but we were startled by the intelligence, that nothing of the kind could be had, and that there were not even horses or mules to be hired at any place nearer than the very town whither we were going. This was rather an alarming piece of news, for our boat had left us, the weather was too hot for walking, and the distance to be travelled full fifteen miles. Had we not sent the boat away, the matter would have been easily managed, because we might have sailed round to the point, where the fleet was to anchor; but this was no longer in our power, and being rather unwilling to pursue our journey on foot, we were altogether at a loss how to determine. While we thus hesitated, the Hidalgo suggested, that if we would condescend to ride upon asses, he thought he could obtain a sufficient number for our party; a proposal with which we gladly closed, prudently determining that any mode of being carried was better than walking. Leaving the arrangement of this affair, therefore, to our obliging friend, we retired to rest upon clean comfortable shakedowns, spread for us on the floor; and, on waking in the morning, we found that he had not been negligent in the charge assigned him. Our party consisted of five officers, with five ser-

vants, for whose accommodation we found ten asses at the door, each attended by its driver, armed with a long pole tipped with an iron spike, for the purpose of goading the animal whenever it should become lazy.

It was not without a good deal of laughing, that the cavalcade, after bidding adieu to the hospitable Mayor, began to move forward. Besides the ridiculousness of being mounted upon asses, these asses were without bridles, and had no saddles, except such as are used when the animals are loaded with goods for the market; for our own comfort, therefore, we were obliged to sit, á-la-femelle, and having no command over the heads of our steeds, we were content to be guided by the hallooing and punching of the drivers. In spite, however, of these inconveniences, if they may be so called, I shall never cease to congratulate myself on having been of the party, because the ride was beyond comparison the most agreeable I ever remember to have taken.

The road from Villa Franca to Ponto del Gada quits the water's edge, and turns, for a little way, inland, carrying you though a region as romantic and beautiful as can well be imagined; there are here no level plains, no smooth paths over which a landau or tilbury might glide, but, on the contrary, a rugged and stony track, sometimes leading down the face of steep hills, sometimes scaling

heights which at the distance of a mile appear to be almost perpendicular, and sometimes winding along the side of a cliff, and by the edge of a fearful precipice. Except when you reach the summit of a mountain, the road is in general shaded by the richest underwood, hanging over it from above; but the whole aspect of the country is decidedly that of a volcanic production: the rocks seem to have been cast up and torn asunder by some prodigious violence, and hurled by a force which nothing but a volcano could possess, into the most grotesque and irregular shapes. It is no uncommon thing to pass under a huge crag, leaning almost horizontally over the road, and bedded in the earth by a foundation apparently so slight, as to appear likely to fall every moment, precipitating the enormous mass upon the luckless wretch beneath. Nay, the very colour of the stones, and the quantity of what bears every resemblance to vitrification, scattered about, all tend to induce the belief, that the main island owes its formation to the same cause which doubtless produced the smaller one, that has now disappeared.

But you must not fancy, from this description, that St. Michael's is nothing but a barren rock; far from it. There is, indeed, in this direction, at least, a fair proportion of that commodity, but tracts of cultivated ground are not therefore wanting. I should not certainly suppose that the soil

was remarkably rich in any part of the island; but it produces the fig, the orange tree, and a grape from which they make very tolerable wine; there is excellent pasture for sheep, and a competent supply of grain. But that in which the Azores, and St. Michael's among the number, particularly excel, is the extreme salubrity of the climate: lying in nearly the same degree of latitude with Lisbon, the intense heat which oppresses in that city, is here alleviated by refreshing sea-breezes; by which means, though I believe there is no occasion at any season to complain of cold, it is only in the very height of the dog-days, if then, that a person, not actually engaged in violent exercise, is justified in complaining of sultriness.

The trade of St. Michael's, as far as I could learn, is confined exclusively to fruit; the fig and the orange are the staple commodities, and being both very abundant, they are, of course, proportionably cheap. Into the praise of a St. Michael's orange it is unnecessary for me to enter, because it is generally allowed to be the best with which the English market is supplied; but of the excellence of the St. Michael's fig, I am not sure that my countrymen are so much aware. It might be, that not having seen a fig for a considerable lapse of time, my appetite was peculiarly sharpened towards its good qualities, but it struck me that I never before tasted any so highly flavoured or so delicate.

Besides these, they sell to vessels putting in, as we did, for water, some of the wine made in this and the neighbouring islands; but the quantity thus disposed of, must be too inconsiderable to entitle it to be classed among the articles of merchandize.

I find, however, that I am entering upon subjects in which I am but little versed, and digressing from my narrative. Let me return, then, to self, that beloved idol of all travellers, and inform you, that after we had ridden about six miles, the road, which had hitherto conducted us along a narrow glen, where the vision was intercepted on both sides, now carried us to the summit of a lofty mountain, from whence we enjoyed the satisfaction of an extensive prospect, both of the sea and of the interior. Looking towards the former, we beheld our own fleet bearing down majestically upon Ponto del Gada, and now fast approaching the anchorage. Turning our eyes inland again, we were delighted with a view of mountain and valley, rock and culture, wood and pasturage, intermingled in the most exquisite degree of irregularity; but what principally attracted our attention, was a thick dark smoke rising slowly from the summit of a high hill that bounded the prospect. Our curiosity being excited by this phenomenon, we enquired from our guides into its cause, and were informed that the mountain in question was a volcano, and that, at its base, and along its sides, were

hot springs of water, of a temperature sufficient to boil an egg in three minutes. This piece of intelligence confirmed me, as you may suppose, in my former opinion relative to the operative cause in the production of these islands; though, indeed, had such evidence been wanting, I should nevertheless have concluded, either that they were thrown up, in their present form, from the bottom of the sea, or at least that they were torn asunder from one another by the force of fire. It must be confessed, however, that mine is the opinion of one who has devoted little of his attention to geology; but I would by all means advise the disciples of Werner to come hither, if they desire further helps in the prosecution of that very interesting and practically useful study.

LETTER V.

AS I am aware that you dislike equally with myself, the usual formalities at the commencement of a letter, I shall continue my journal without offering any observation or comment, which could serve no end, but that of occasioning a break in the narrative.

Descending the mountain on which we had paused for a few minutes, to glut our eyes and satisfy our curiosity, we arrived at a small hamlet, or rather a group of two or three hovels, as romantically situated as it is possible for the imagination of man to conceive. They stood at the further end of a sort of recess, formed by the hills, which are here broken into a circular valley, cut off, to all appearance, from the rest of the habitable world; behind them rose a towering crag, as perpendicular as the drop of a plummet, from the top of which a little rivulet came tumbling down, giving to the scene an appearance of the most delightful coolness, and amusing the ear with the unceasing roar of a water-fall. From the very face of the cliff, where there seemed to be scarcely soil enough to nourish a thistle, numerous shrubs and dwarf trees pro-

truded themselves, whilst above it, and on every side of the area, the hills were covered with wood, interrupted now and then by the bald forehead of a blackened rock. In front of the hamlet again, there was an opening sufficient to admit the most delicious glimpse of the ocean; and through this the stream, after boiling for a while in a little basin which it has excavated for itself out of what resembles the foundation of the cliff, makes its way, brawling over a clear pebbly bottom, till it joins the sea.

This paragon of valleys, and master-piece of nature's handy-work, burst upon us as such scenes, to be witnessed with advantage, ought to do, without the slightest warning or expectation. The road by which we approached it, being completely shut in with wood, and winding considerably to aid the descent, brought us out nearly at the gorge of the vale, so as to throw the hamlet, the cliff, and the waterfall, into the back-ground; and, as the whole was of such extent as to be taken in at one glance, the effect was striking beyond any of the kind I ever witnessed. You may imagine that we had no desire to hurry through such a glen as this; and needed not the additional motive which the weariness of our donkeys afforded, to persuade us to a temporary halt. Giving the animals, therefore, to the care of their owners, we dismounted, and went into some of the cabins, the inhabitants of

which appeared to be as simple as the situation of their abodes had prepared us to expect. The men were all goat-herds, and the women seemed to be as idle as their countrywomen in Portugal, sitting at the doors of their houses, surrounded by groups of half-naked and filthy-looking children. To judge by their dress, and the furniture of their hovels, they were miserably poor, though perfectly contented; they did not ask us for money, but astonished, I suppose, at the glaring colour of our coats, they were very inquisitive to know who we were, and whence we had come. The English, the French, and the Portuguese, seem to be the only three nations of whose existence they have any knowledge; and having been assured, in answer to their first question, that we were not French, they immediately added, then you must be English. They did not appear, however, to be without some degree of cunning, for as long as we paused in replying to their query, they were silent, but no sooner had we answered in the negative, than they launched forth into the most violent invectives against the French; convincing us, that the animosity of the mother-country towards its barbarous invaders, is not more implacable than that of the colonies.

Having loitered away half an hour in this romantic spot, and distributed a few dollars among its inhabitants, we remounted our steeds and con-

tinued our journey. The remainder of the ride carried us through scenery very similar to what we had already passed; the only difference was that the nearer we approached to Ponto del Gada, the more frequent became the spots of cultivation, the width and smoothness of the road improving in proportion; till, at last, when we had attained the brow of an eminence, from whence the town with its port and bay were distinguishable, we looked down upon an extensive valley, richly covered with fields of standing corn. Quickening our pace we soon entered the capital of St. Michael's, and were conducted by the drivers, to a good hotel, kept by an Englishwoman of the name of Currie, where we found every accommodation we could desire, at a very moderate expense.

As we had started at an early hour from Villa Franca, the clocks were just striking ten, when we alighted at Mrs. Currie's hotel; consequently, there was a long day yet before us, in which we might see every thing that was to be seen in the place. Having discharged our muleteers, therefore, who seemed overjoyed at the receipt of one dollar a-piece, swallowed a hasty breakfast, and made ourselves somewhat comfortable, we lost no time in setting out upon a stroll of examination and discovery.

Ponto del Gada is, in the whole, rather a neat town, containing from twelve to fourteen thousand

inhabitants; but being built, especially in the outskirts, without much regard to compactness, it covers more ground than many places of double the amount in population. It stands upon a little bay, formed by two projecting head-lands, and can boast of a tolerable harbour, and excellent roadstead. In its immediate vicinity, the country is more uniformly level than any I had yet observed; the vale extending to the distance of four or five miles on every side, and ending in an amphitheatre of low green hills, which resemble, in appearance, the downs as they are seen from Eastbourne, in Sussex. The whole of this flat is in a state of high cultivation, being cleared, perhaps, too completely, of wood, and portioned off into different fields and parks by hedges and stone walls. Judging from the appearance of the crops, I should conceive that the soil was here of some depth, as well as fertility; the whole valley being covered with wheat, barley, and Indian corn. In truth, from the aspect of the country beyond the downs, where rocks tower one above another in rude and barren grandeur, one is almost tempted to believe that the whole industry of the island has necessarily expended itself upon this spot, because it was the only one capable of rewarding it. I was assured, however, by the natives, that such is not the case; and that, in the interior, and towards the opposite coast, the rugged magnificence of moun-

tain scenery gives way to a more profitable, though less picturesque champaign.

The principal streets of Ponto del Gada are paved, and kept at once cool and clean by a constant sprinkling of water, which it is the business of two or three men stationed at pumps within a certain distance of one another, to scatter over them. Of the bye streets little can be said, they being, like those of other Portuguese towns, composed of mean cottages, unpaved, and extremely dirty. There is, however, an air of elegance given to the town, particularly when looked at from a distance, by the intermixture of orange groves among the houses; the largest of these, wherever they happen to stand, being in general surrounded by extensive gardens, all of which are abundantly stocked with that graceful and odoriferous plant. Add to this the number of towers and spires with which its numerous churches and convents are supplied, and the first coup-d'œil may be conceived to be extremely striking and imposing.

As soon as we had taken a general survey of the streets, the next object of attention was the religious houses. In these, however, there was but little to admire, the architecture being of the plainest kind, and even the chapels as much wanting in ornament as can be imagined. There were, indeed, in most of them, some trifling attempts at carved work and gilding upon the roof, a little stained glass,

neither rich nor ancient, in the windows, and a few tawdry pictures suspended above the altars; but the *tout ensemble* was decidedly that of buildings which did not even aim at beauty or grandeur. The monks we found a good natured obliging set of men, very willing to give us any information in their power; by one of whom I was fortunate enough to be conducted through a convent of Augustine friars. Into their mode of living it is not to be supposed that I could obtain much insight. It seemed, however, to be less indolent than that of some convents, which I had visited in the old country, and approached proportionably nearer to a college life among ourselves; though it must be admitted that the fellows and under-graduates of Oxford and Cambridge have a better notion of both comfort and elegance, than the Augustine friars of St. Michael's. Of the nuns, of course, we saw nothing, excepting through the grates. We found them full of curiosity, and eager to know as much as they could learn of the world from which they were excluded; but quite as fond of flirting as any set of young ladies at a boarding school. It was amusing to observe their mode of begging; for all the nuns in this part of the world are licensed beggars. The younger and fairer members of the sisterhood came to the grate first; chatted, sung, and presented us with artificial flowers, and then retiring made way for the old and the ugly, who re-

quested a little money for the good of our souls and their bodies. To solicitations thus expressed, it was impossible to turn a deaf ear, and the consequence was, that we soon discovered it to be quite as expensive an amusement to flirt with a nun, as with any other belle in London or elsewhere.

Besides the churches and convents, amounting in all to not fewer than nine, there is a fort erected for the protection of the harbour, which we likewise endeavoured to see; but were prevented by the sentinel at the gate, who refused us admittance. The disappointment, however, was not great, as it was easy to perceive, from its outward appearance, that the fort could possess few points worthy of observation; and, indeed, we attributed the reluctance evinced, in admitting strangers, to its utter uselessness as a place of defence.

To describe all this occupies but a small portion of my time, and to read the description will occupy a still smaller portion of yours; but to see it was the laborious employment of an entire day. Wearied out, therefore, with my exertions, and not feeling myself much rewarded, at least for the latter part of my trouble, I returned in the evening to the hotel, where, as the ships were still at anchor taking on board water and fresh provisions, I ventured to spend the night.

Having thus discovered that there was little in

the works of art, and a great deal in those of nature, throughout St. Michael's, to interest the traveller, a friend and myself determined to set off next morning on a visit to the volcano. With this design we ordered asses, for asses are the only animals for hire, to be in readiness by day-break, and finding them in waiting at the time appointed, we took a guide with us and pushed forward in the direction of the dark smoke. The mountain with its crater, being distinctly visible from Ponto del Gada, we took it for granted that the distance between the two places could not exceed twelve or fourteen miles; but, on inquiring of our guide, we were alarmed by the information, that the nearest road would carry us at least twenty-seven miles from the town. Thunder-struck by this news, we were for some time at a loss what course to pursue. To proceed was dangerous, because, mounted as we were, to go and return the same day was impossible; and, if we remained so far from the shipping during the night, the fleet might sail before we should be able to get back. On the other hand, to give up our design and quit a country where a volcano was to be seen, without seeing it, appeared rather a mortifying prospect. After weighing for a few minutes the chances on both sides, I shall not say with the utmost impartiality, curiosity finally prevailed over fear; and, in order to prevent any further repentance and consequent change of

mind, we put our donkeys into a gallop, and hurried on as fast as they could carry us. But the speed of the asses, and our own venturous determination proved, after all, equally unavailing; for, on gaining the summit of the downs, and looking back upon the fleet, we beheld, to our great sorrow, the signal for sailing floating from the topmasts of all the ships. Mortified at our disappointment, and at the same time rejoicing that we had got no further on our journey, we were compelled to turn our asses' heads, and to retrace our steps towards Ponto del Gada; where we found every thing in the bustle and confusion of a re-embarkation. The beach was covered with sailors, soldiers; bullocks, and casks of fresh water, hurrying, and being hurried, indiscriminately into the boats which had come to take them off. The townspeople were running about upon the strand, some offering their skiffs to convey the officers on board the ships, some helping to swing the bullocks into the barges, and others shouting and hallooing apparently from the uninterested love of noise. In short, it was a scene of great liveliness and bustle, perhaps rather too much so to be agreeable.

Seeing this universal eagerness to reach the fleet, we, of course, threw ourselves into the first boat we could approach, and in a short time found ourselves on board our own ship. But here a very tantalizing piece of news awaited us, for we learnt

that, in spite of all this show of preparation, the admiral had not began to weigh anchor; nor was there any intention of moving, at soonest, before the morrow. The opportunity, however, was lost, and could not be recovered, consequently we were obliged to summit as cheerfully as we could, though it was impossible to help regretting, what had at first been a source of consolation, the circumstance of our having caught a view of the signal at the time we did. But, as the event proved, it was quite as well for us that we had ridden no further from the shore; for on the day following the signal was again repeated; and by way of giving additional weight to it, the admiral began to shake loose his top-sails. Nor did it prove, like that of yesterday, a false alarm. By mid-day the victualling and watering being complete, the fleet immediately began to get under weigh; and, as the wind blew fair and fresh, before dark the mountains of St. Michael's could be seen only like a thin vapour in the sky. Next morning, nothing but the old prospect of air and water met the gaze, as we stood our course, at a rapid rate, towards Bermuda.

The voyage from St. Michael's to Bermuda occupied a space of almost an entire month, the first having been lost sight of on the 27th of June, and it being the 24th of July before the low shores of the last could be discerned. It was, however, a sail of more interest, and pro-

ductive of more variety than that from Bourdeaux to the Azores. We had now got within the influence of the tropical climate, and were not unfrequently amused with water-spouts, and other phenomena peculiar to warm regions. The flying fish, likewise, and its pursuer the dolphin, afforded at least something to look at; whilst many idle hours were whiled away in attempts to catch, or strike the latter with harpoons. In these we were not always unsuccessful, consequently I had several opportunities of watching the change of colour which that fish undergoes when it is dying; and though the description generally given of it is certainly indebted in some degree to the imagination of voyagers, I must confess that the transitions from blue to purple, and from purple to green, with all the intermediate shades, are extremely beautiful. When the fish is in the water, it is by no means remarkable for brilliancy of hue, and as soon as it is dead, it returns to its original colour,—a dingy sea green; but whilst it is floundering and flapping upon the deck, it is impossible to say what is its real appearance, so many, and so different are the hues which it assumes. Nor did we escape without the occasional occurrence of a less agreeable species of variety; I mean squalls, thunder-storms, and whirlwinds. As we approached Bermuda, indeed, these became too frequent to excite any interest, beyond an earnest desire that they would cease; but while we were yet a good

way off, and the incident rare, they were witnessed with more of admiration than terror.

Besides these amusements with which nature supplied us, we were not backward in endeavouring to amuse ourselves. Being now pretty well accustomed to the atmosphere of a ship, we began to consider ourselves at home, and to give balls and other public entertainments through the fleet. One of these I shall take leave to describe, because I am sure it must interest from its novelty.

On the 19th of July, at an early hour in the morning, a signal was made from the Royal Oak, that the admiral would be happy to see the officers of the fleet, on board his ship that evening. Boats were accordingly sent off from the different vessels, loaded with visitors; and, on mounting the gang-way, a stage, with a green curtain before it, was discovered upon the quarter-deck. The whole of the deck, from the poop to the main-mast, was hung round with flags, so as to form a moderate sized theatre; and the carronades were removed from their port-holes, in order to make room for the company. Lamps were suspended from all parts of the rigging and shrouds, casting a brilliant light upon this singular play-house; and the crew, arrayed in their best attire, crowded the booms, yards, and fore part of the deck whilst the space from the main-mast to the foot of the stage, was set with benches for the more genteel part of the audience.

At seven o'clock the curtain drew up, and dis-

covered a scene painted with such taste, as would not have disgraced any theatre in London. The play was the Apprentice, with the Mayor of Garret as an after-piece, performed by the officers of the ship, and of the artillery; and went off in high style, applauded, as you may suppose, with the loudest acclamations. The quarter-deck of a British line of battle ship has often enough been a stage for the exhibition of bloody tragedies, but to witness a comedy and a farce upon that stage, and in the middle of the Atlantic ocean, was delightful from its very singularity. When the performance was at an end, the stage was knocked down, the seats removed, and every thing cleared for dancing. The music was excellent, being composed of the band of the Royal Oak; and the ball was opened by Admiral Malcombe and the Honourable Mrs. Mullens, in a country dance, followed by as many couples as the space would permit, the greater number of officers dancing, as you may believe, with one another. In this amusement every person, from the admiral and general, down to the youngest ensign and midshipman, joined, laying aside, for the time, all restraint or form of discipline; and having kept it up with great spirit till considerably beyond mid-night, a blue light was hoisted as a signal for the different boats to come off for the strangers, and each returned to his own ship highly gratified with the evening's entertainment.

LETTER VI.

By employing ourselves in this manner, and by keeping up what is emphatically called a good heart, we contrived to pass our time agreeably enough. Whenever the weather would permit, and the fleet lay well together, we made parties of pleasure to the different ships; when the wind was too high, and the fleet too much scattered for such proceedings, we remained at home, and amused ourselves in the best way we could. Some of the captains, and our's among the number, were possessed of very tolerable libraries; the doors of which they politely threw open for the benefit of their military guests; and thus, by reading, fishing, and boating, we were enabled to make head, with some success, against the encroachments of ennui. It must be confessed, however, that in spite of strenuous efforts to the contrary, that determined enemy of all idle persons, was beginning to gain ground upon us, when about mid-day, on the 24th of July, a cry of land was heard from the mast-head. All eyes were immediately turned in the direction to which the sailor pointed, and as

the wind blew fair, and moderately fresh, no great length of time elapsed, before the same object was distinguishable from the deck. A signal was immediately hoisted for a pilot, who lost no time in coming off to us; and before dark, we were at anchor opposite to the tanks in Bermuda.

The appearance of Bermuda is altogether as different from that of St. Michael's as one thing can be from another. While the other, with its lofty mountains and bold shores, can be seen at the distance of many leagues, a ship must be within a few miles of this before the slightest symptom of land is discernible. On this account, it is, that mariners find greater difficulty in making Bermuda, than perhaps any other island or continent in the known world; the most experienced seamen frequently running past it, and not a few suffering shipwreck every year, upon its numerous shoals and rocks. For not only is the land itself low, and thus apt to be run against by vessels which may have approached, in stormy weather, too near to put about; but for many miles around it, reefs of sunken rock stretch out into the sea in every direction; insomuch that even the approach to the principal anchorage is no more than a narrow channel between two such reefs, in many places scarcely exceeding a mile, or a mile and a half in width. The navigation, even in calm weather, is therefore attended with considerable danger; the

idea of which is greatly heightened by the remarkable clearness of the water, and the peculiar brightness of the rocks. In some places this is so much the case, that the bottom may be seen at the depth of six and seven fathoms: while the aspect of the reefs which lie on each side, as you steer towards the anchorage, is such, as almost to persuade one, contrary to the evidence of reason, that a man might leap upon them from a boat, without incurring the danger of being wet above the knees. Yet these very reefs are seldom covered with less than six, and sometimes with fourteen and fifteen feet of water.

Low as they are, the shores of Bermuda are nevertheless extremely beautiful. They are covered with cedar, a tree which here, at least, seldom exceeds the height of twenty feet, and from which, before the sun has risen, and after he has set, the land breeze comes loaded with the most delicious perfume. Under the wood there grows a rich short turf, apparently struggling to spread itself over the chalky rocks of which the entire island, or rather islands, seem to be composed; and, as the houses of the better orders are chiefly built within reach of the cool air from the water, they, with their little lawns and gardens, produce a lively and pleasing effect.

As darkness had come on before the ship could be properly moored, no boats were permitted to

leave her that night; but, at an early hour next morning, I embraced the first opportunity of going on shore. To reach St. George's, the capital of the colony, you are obliged to row, for several miles, up a narrow frith called the ferry, immediately on entering which, the scenery becomes in the highest degree picturesque. Though still retaining its character of low, the ground, on each side, looks as if it were broken into little swells, the whole of them beautifully shaded with groves of cedar, and many of them crowned with country houses, as white as the drifted snow. But the fact is, that this appearance of hill and dale is owing to the prodigious number of islands which compose the cluster; there being, in all, according to vulgar report, not fewer than three hundred and sixty-five; of which the largest exceeds not seven or eight miles in diameter. Yet it is only when you follow what at first you are inclined to mistake for a creek, or the mouth of a river, that you discover the want of vallies between these hills; and even then, you are more apt to fancy yourself upon the bosom of a lake studded with islets, than steering amid spots of earth which stand, each of them distinct, in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean.

In the town of St. George's there is literally nothing to be seen, at least nothing worthy of being repeated. It consists of about fifty or sixty houses, the glare from which, as they are all built

of the chalk-stone, is extremely dazzling to the eyes. It is called the capital, because here the court-house stands, and the magisterial sittings are held; but in point of size, and, as far as I could learn, in every other respect, it is greatly inferior to Hamilton, another town at the opposite extremity of the cluster, which I did not visit. A little way from St. George's, and on the summit of a bare rock, stand the barracks; fitted up for the accommodation of a thousand men; and about a mile and a half beyond them, are the tanks, well worth the notice of travellers. The object of this work is to catch and preserve the rain, a measure which the total want of fresh springs throughout the colony renders absolutely necessary. There are, indeed, wells dug upon the beach, but the water in these is only sea-water, filtered and rendered brackish in making its way through the sand; and by no means fit to be used, at least, in any quantity. To supply this deficiency, the bad effects of which were experienced in the unhealthiness of many of the crews upon the American station, government was induced to build these tanks; consequently the water contained in them is the property of the king, and none but king's ships, with the troops in garrison, are permitted, except in extreme cases, to be supplied from thence.

The climate of Bermuda has been extolled by

many, and among the rest by Mr. Moore in his odes, and epistles, as salubrious and delightful. It is possible that he, and the rest of its eulogists, may have visited these islands, at a season of the year different from that in which I visited them, but to me the heat was beyond every thing oppressive. Lying, as they do, under the influence of a vertical sun, and abounding, in all directions, with cliffs of white chalk, it is obvious that the constant reflection of the sun's rays thereby occasioned must be quite overpowering. If these panegyrists mean to say, that as long as you contrive to keep in the shade, and if you take care not to stir abroad till after sun-set, you will find the Bermudas deserving of their title of summer-islands, then I will agree with them; but I believe there is no man who ever walked the street of St. George's at noon, or any other spot where the sun-beams could reach him, that did not consider the heat as anything rather than temperate.

But whatever may be thought of the climate, there can, I think, be but one opinion as to the soil. It is generally admitted, that there is no more unproductive spot of earth upon the face of the deep, than Bermuda. The only animals which appear to thrive are the goat, and the duck; the cedar and a few calash trees are the only wood, and, except the most common kinds of vegetables, such as cabbages, onions, and sweet

potatoes ; I know of hardly another thing brought to perfection, even in the gardens. The fruits which a stranger may meet with, are no doubt delicious, since among them he will find the shaddock and the pine-apple ; but for these, as well as for almost all their other comforts and luxuries, the Bermudians are indebted to the continent of America, or to the West Indies. Whether this be owing to the natural sterility of the soil, or to the extreme indolence of the inhabitants, I cannot pretend to decide; though I should be inclined to suspect, that both were, in some degree, to blame ; but its consequences are felt by all visiters, in a very sensible manner, every article of living being here sold for thrice its intrinsic value. That provisions should be dear in this country cannot surprise, when it is considered, that this small island (for in spite of myself I cannot help regarding the whole cluster as one) is the general depot, and place of resort for repairs and stores, to a large proportion of the British navy, scattered along the coast of America ; but, surely, if the natives were a little more industrious, they might afford to sell their goods at a cheaper rate, and at the same time to secure an equal, if not a greater profit. But their indolence is beyond all conception, and can be attributed only to, what I believe is its real cause, the facility with which they acquire fortunes, from men who are necessitated to give whatever

they demand for the most trifling article. The poorest and meanest freeman upon the island, never dreams of applying his own hand, or even his own head, to the cultivation of the ground; and being abundantly supplied with negro slaves, they leave every thing, even the care of providing necessaries for themselves, to the industry of that ill-used race. You may perhaps consider me as too severe upon the Bermudians, but rest assured that I repeat only what I was told by some of themselves; nor did I, from my own personal observation, discover any cause to question the veracity of my informers.

In the praise bestowed by Mr. Moore upon the beauty of these regions, I do, however, most cordially join. There is something bewitchingly pretty, for pretty is perhaps the most appropriate epithet I could use, in every one of the many views which you may obtain from different points. The low and elegant cedar, the green short turf, the frequent recurrence of the white and dazzling rock, the continual rise and fall of the numerous small islands, but above all, the constant intermingling of land and water, seem more like a drawing of fairy land, than a reality. There is nothing grand, nothing imposing, or calculated to excite any feeling bordering upon the awful, throughout the whole; but it is soft, gentle, and exquisitely pleasing.

Having spent the day at St. George's, I returned

on board to sleep; and on the morrow removed, with my baggage, to a transport then lying at anchor within the ferry, which was thenceforth to be my head quarters. There is, I am aware, an universal prejudice against transports, which I firmly believe to be not more general than unjust. There are few gales which the greater number of those in the English service will not ride out; and there are few situations in which they are not sufficiently manned, to be manageable. For my own part, I confess my predilection for a transport rather than for a ship of war: because in the one, you are absolutely nothing, the captain being there all in all; whilst in the other you are at least your own master, and have the command of your own men. To my new quarters I accordingly removed, without experiencing a shadow of regret; and soon found reason to congratulate myself on the greater degree of liberty which I from that time enjoyed.

You will readily believe, that a very small portion of my time was now wasted on board ship; for economy's sake I usually slept there, because at the inn the charge for beds, as well as for every thing else, was enormous; but all the hours of daylight were devoted to rowing round the different islands, and climbing the different eminences, from whence the most extensive prospects were to be obtained. Among other curiosities, I was informed

two caves in one of the little isles, distant about four or five miles from the place where we lay. Being assured that they were highly deserving of notice, I determined to visit them; and setting off one evening, with several others, for that purpose, we reached the spot which had been pointed out to us, a little before dark. We fastened the boat to the stump of a tree, and were proceeding towards the caves, when a fine manly voice, singing one of the Irish melodies, attracted our attention. Being rather curious to discover who, in this extra-mundane place, had learnt to sing with so much taste, we followed the direction of the sound, till we came upon a party sitting under the shade of a tent, and like ourselves, enjoying the cool of the evening; on perceiving us, some of them came forward, and the satisfaction was mutual, when we recognized one another as old acquaintances. They urged us to relinquish our design, and to partake of their good cheer, with which, as the hour was late, we had small reluctance in complying; and it was agreed, that instead of going on without proper guides, and at so unseasonable a time, we should breakfast together at the same spot in the morning, and proceed in a body to examine the caverns. Here, therefore, we remained till the moon had risen, when we returned to our boat, and sailed back to the ship.

Next morning every thing was got ready for the

expedition, but a heavy squall coming on, prevented us from setting out as early as we had intended; as soon as this blew over, we took to our boat, and reached the place of rendezvous in time to share the remains of a good breakfast, which our friends had prepared for themselves and us. When it was finished, we supplied ourselves with torches from some dry branches of the calash tree, and headed by a guide, moved towards the mouth of the nearest and largest of the two caves. We descended into this by a ladder of sixteen steps, and arrived upon a broad ledge of rock, where we halted for a few minutes to light the torches, and accustom our vision to the gloom; when both of these ends were attained, and we had advanced a few paces into the cave, a sight of the most indescribable sublimity burst upon us. The appearance was that of a huge Gothic cathedral, having its roof supported upon pillars of spar, moulded into the most regular shapes, and fluted and carved after the most exact models of architecture. The roof itself, however, was too lofty to be discerned, nor could the eye penetrate to any thing like an extremity, all beyond a certain extent being wrapped in the most profound darkness; but the flashes of light which at intervals streamed out, as the glare of the torches fell upon pieces of spar as clear as crystal, and the deep echo of our own voices as we spoke, inspired us with a feeling of awe, bordering

upon superstition. It is in such a situation as this, that the poorness and insignificance of human labour, most forcibly strikes the mind. The most magnificent church and abbey, with their sculptured pillars and vaulted ceilings, were thought of as mean in comparison of what was now before us; nay, one could not help imagining, that these very churches and abbeys had been built in humble imitation of this, which looked like a temple reared by some beings more powerful than men. It seemed a shrine worthy of the genii of old, while yet they were in the zenith of their glory, and ere they had been driven from their thrones and oracles of darkness, by the light of Christianity.

As we moved onward, we found the sides of the cave gradually narrow upon us, and the roof become lower and lower. There was, however, a continuance of the same fane-like appearance to the last, though growing more and more contracted; till, finally, we were compelled to advance one by one, and to stoop in order to prevent our heads from coming in contact with the rock. We had now gone as far it was possible to go with any degree of comfort, and were informed by the guide, that we were upwards of three hundred yards from the entrance, when we found it expedient to wheel about, and to return to the open air. But the effect of so sudden a change, from darkness to light, was exceedingly disagreeable; insomuch, that we has-

tened into the smaller cave, as well for the purpose of deferring the moment of suffering, as to continue our search after the sublime.

The entrance to this cavern is extremely dangerous, and not to be ventured upon without either a trusty guide, or a thorough knowledge of the ground. After descending a ladder, not quite so deep as that which leads into the larger cave, you arrive at the brink of a fearful chasm, across which a flat stone, about two feet in width, is laid, connecting the edges by a bridge of four or five feet in length. It is very fortunate that this frightful bridge is of no greater extent, for if you should chance to slip, or lose your balance whilst upon it, nothing could save you from being precipitated into the gulf. To what depth this chasm may reach, the guide could not inform us; but that it is considerable, we discovered, by dropping a large stone, which we could hear for some time as it dashed against the projecting edges of the rock, and at length splashed, with a tremendous echo, into water. The man maintained, that the sea beat under the foundation of the island as far as the spot where we now stood, and his story was rendered at least probable, by the number of pools of salt-water, which we met with in the interior of the cave.

After having visited the larger cavern, this certainly appeared to disadvantage; but, had I beheld

it first, or without seeing the other at all, I should have believed that nothing upon earth could surpass it for grandeur and beauty; the only respect in which it is inferior to the other, being its size. The spar is as clear, and proportionably as abundant; the pillars are quite as regularly formed; and it has even an advantage over its rival in two or three broken columns, which give to it the semblance of a temple in ruins. There is, also, in this cave, a strange propinquity of salt and fresh water pools; the situation of two of which struck me as peculiarly curious. They were divided from each other by a piece of rock not much thicker than a man's hand; and yet the water from the one tasted as if it had been taken from the German ocean, while that from the other was as fresh and pleasant as possible.

We had by this time fully gratified our curiosity, and once more ascended to the world of sunshine; the splendour of which was at first almost insupportable. By degrees, however, our eyes became accustomed to the change, and recovered their original tone, when we separated, each party returning to its respective ship, in high good humour with the day's employment.

But to dine quietly on board was no longer endurable. A tent was accordingly carried on shore, and having sought out the most shady and agreeable nook within a moderate distance of the vessel,

our dinner was brought thither, and we spent the evening, as we had done the morning, among the works of nature. Here we remained till a late hour, talking over the adventures of the day, and occasionally attempting a blind peep into futurity, till our friend, the moon, having risen, we again pulled on board by her light, and retired to sleep, and to dream of sparry domes and enchanted temples.

LETTER VII.

HURRIED away by the desire, so natural to most men, of speaking of myself, I have neglected to record the occurrence of some incidents which you will probably consider as more interesting than any that I have yet told, because they relate to the expedition at large. In the first place I forgot to state, that we found Sir Alexander Cochrane in the Tonnant of eighty guns, waiting at Bermuda, to take upon himself the guidance of the fleet. In the next place, I did not inform you, that the secret of our destination transpired as soon as we had anchored off the island; and that the bay of Chesapeake is to be the theatre of our operations. Lastly, I omitted to mention, that on the 30th, our little army was reinforced by the junction of the 21st Fusileers; a fine battalion, mustering nine hundred bayonets. The evening before, a squadron of six frigates and several transports appeared in the offing, which by mid-day on the 30th were all at anchor in the roads. They proved to be from the Mediterranean, having the 21st, 29th, and 62d Regiments on board, of which the two latter were pro-

ceeding to join Sir George Prevost's army in Canada, while the former attached itself to that under the command of General Ross. By this very acceptable reinforcement, our numbers were increased to upwards of three thousand effective men, and a greater confidence in themselves, as well as a better grounded hope of success, in whatever enterprize they might undertake, was at the same time given to the troops.

Having already dwelt sufficiently upon my own personal adventures at Bermuda, I shall not waste your time by a particular detail of the various preparations which during this interval were making throughout the fleet. Stores of provisions, fresh water, ammunition, clothing, &c. were provided, and magazines for the future supply of the expedition established; when, on the 3d of August, all things being now complete, the ships once more got under weigh, and stood towards America.

During the whole of this day, the wind was light and unsteady, consequently little progress was made, nor did the white rocks of Bermuda disappear till darkness concealed them; but towards morning a fresher and more favourable breeze sprung up, and the rest of the voyage was performed in reasonable time, and without the occurrence of any incident worthy of notice. The heat, indeed, became more and more oppressive every day, and the irksomeness of renewed confinement was more

sensibly experienced from the long holiday which we had enjoyed on shore; but, in other respects, every thing returned to its former state, till towards evening on the 14th, when a signal was made by the admiral, that land was in sight. As yet, however, there was no appearance of it from the deck of our transport, nor, for a full half hour, could our anxious gaze be rewarded by the slightest trace of what it sought; but, at the end of that time, the low sandy point of Cape Charles began to show itself, and we rejoiced in the prospect of a speedy release from the ennui of a sea-faring life.

The coast of America, at least in this quarter, is universally low and uninteresting; insomuch that for some time before the land itself can be discerned, forests of pines appear to rise, as it were, out of the water. It is also dangerous, from the numerous shoals and sand-banks which run out, in many places, to a considerable extent into the sea; and which are so formidable, that no master of a vessel, unless he chance to be particularly well acquainted with the navigation, will venture to approach after dark. The fleet was accordingly anchored within a few miles of the shore, but no sooner had the day began to break, than the sails were again hoisted; and the ships steering under the influence of a leading wind, between the Capes Charles and Henry, stood in gallant style up the Chesapeake.

This noble bay is far too wide, and the land on each side, too flat to permit any but an indistinct glimpse of the shore, from the deck of a vessel which keeps well towards the middle. We could distinguish nothing, therefore, on either hand, except the tops of trees, with, occasionally, a windmill, or a light-house; but the view of our own fleet was, in truth, so magnificent, as to prevent any murmuring on that account. Immediately on entering, we were joined by Admiral Cockburn with three line of battle ships, several frigates, and a few sloops of war and gun brigs, by which means, the squadron could now muster above twenty vessels entitled to display the pendant, besides an equal, if not greater number of victuallers and transports. Nor were we strengthened by this addition, in the naval part of the expedition alone. On board these ships was embarked a powerful reinforcement for the army, consisting of a battalion of seven hundred marines, an hundred negroes lately armed and disciplined, and a division of marine artillery; so that we could now calculate on landing a corps of at least four thousand men. The sight was therefore altogether as grand and imposing as any I ever beheld; because one could not help remembering that this powerful fleet was sailing in an enemy's bay, and was filled with troops for the invasion of that enemy's country. Thus, like a snow-ball, we had gathered as we

went on, and from having set out a mere handful of soldiers, were now become an army formidable from its numbers as well as discipline.

The shoals and sand-banks, which abound on the outside of the bay, continue to encumber the navigation after it is entered; and the consequence was, that the fleet was compelled to anchor every night. This was, of course, the occasion of much delay. The first day's sail carried us to the mouth of the James river; and the second to the mouth of the Potomac; but, on both occasions, we brought up at too great a distance from the beach, to permit a perfect or distinct view of either of these rivers. Opposite to the latter, indeed, we remained for a night and a considerable part of the following day, and the sky being remarkably clear, we saw something more of it, than we had been able to see of the other river. It appeared to be a fine piece of water making its way through the centre of huge forests, and, though the current is in reality strong, flowing on without any apparent motion. But it would have been impossible to trace its course, even had we been nearer the shore, above a few miles, on account of its numerous windings, the first of which, overshadowed as it is with wood, shuts it out from further observation. By continuing here so long, we had begun to conjecture that a landing somewhere on the banks of this river was in contemplation. In this, however, we were deceived,

for about one o'clock the fleet was again under sail, and moving towards the Patuxent; a river which empties itself into the bay, several miles above the Potomac.

It was singular enough, that the ships had scarcely began to lift their anchors, when the sky, which had hitherto been clear and serene, became suddenly darkened, and overcast with heavy clouds; and the water, which before had been as smooth and bright as a mirror, began to rise in black waves tipped with foam, though there was not a breath of air to fill the sails. Hurricanes are, I believe, not unfrequent in this part of the world, and it was expected that these changes in the sea and sky foreboded the arrival of one; but it passed by without coming to any violence, and when we brought up, which was done in the evening, the clouds had dispersed, and the water was again like a glassy lake.

The 18th of August had now arrived, and as yet we had got no farther than to the mouth of the Patuxent. There we lay, as we had done the day before, till noon, waiting, as it seemed, for a breeze; but no sooner did the wind blow fair, than the fleet began to enter the river, and to make its way slowly and majestically against the stream. The sail became now picturesque and interesting in the highest degree. On each hand the banks were covered with fields of Indian corn, and mea-

dows of the most luxuriant pasture; while the neat wooden houses of the settlers, all of them painted white, and surrounded with orchards and gardens, presented a striking contrast to the boundless forests which formed a back ground to the scene. There was, in short, the most delightful mixture of art and nature that can possibly be conceived; different in every respect from what I had seen towards the skirts of the pine-woods in France. There, the country looked as if it had been newly cleared, and as if there had not been time to remove the furze, heath, and underwood, nor yet to burn or grub up the roots of the trees which had been felled. Here, there was the most complete line drawn between the regions devoted to cultivation, and those still in a state of nature. The banks of the river being tolerably high, and sloping gradually down to meet the water, the whole of this inclination is entirely cleared and cultivated, not a remnant of the original forest being left, except as much as is required to form the most beautiful hedge-rows and boundaries between the different fields and farms. The same appearance continues to the distance of perhaps half a mile from the water, the whole space being as perfectly free from wood, as if none had ever grown there; when you arrive at once at the borders of forests through which no eye might pretend to penetrate, and no traveller venture to seek his way. Without beholding the view,

it is impossible for any one to imagine the effect produced by such scenery. Here, nature is seen in her grandest attire ; civilized man in his most pitiful state. The rivers and forests are sublime beyond description, whilst the tiny spots, brought under the dominion of culture and civilization, appear only like petty thefts, from the wild beasts and wilder human inhabitants of these savannas, which they care not to resent, because they are unworthy of their notice.

I need not inform you, that in America, as well as in all other late discovered countries, the banks of navigable rivers are the first places peopled and cleared. The causes of this, you are as much aware of as I am ; namely, that the facility with which they can rid themselves of the trees, as they fell them; and perhaps, in some degree, the prospect of a constant supply of fish from the streams, induce settlers to select such situations, in preference to others further in the interior. These are, probably, the motives which first influenced them in their choice of spots, on which to bestow their labour ; and, if they have an eye to futurity, they will perceive that the same cause, which facilitated their operations in clearing, will supply an easy mode of conveying the produce of the soil to market, either at home or abroad. A sail up any of the rivers in America is, therefore, extremely beautiful, because they are all skirted with the appearances of life

and industry; and the Patuxent being of some size, and considerable depth, you will believe that its banks are not inferior to those of other streams.

We had not proceeded many miles from the river's mouth, when a telegraph from the admiral gave orders for the troops to be in readiness to land at a moment's notice. Every thing was therefore put in a state of forwardness; provisions for three days, that is, three pounds of pork, and two pounds and a half of biscuit, were cooked and given to the men; the cartouch boxes were supplied with fresh ammunition, and the arms and accoutrements handed out. The fleet, however, continued to move on, without showing any inclination to bring up; till, at length, having ascended to the distance of ten leagues from the bay, the ships of the line began to take the ground; and, in a little while after, even the frigates could proceed no farther. But, by this time, the sun had set, and darkness was coming on; consequently, there was no possibility, for that day, of getting the troops on shore without much confusion, if not danger. All, therefore, remained quiet for the night, the soldiers being only moved from the large ships into such as drew least water; and these running up as high as prudence would permit, under convoy of the gun-brigs and sloops of war.

As soon as the dawn began to appear, on the morning of the 19th, there was a general stir

throughout the fleet. A gun-brig had already taken her station within an hundred and fifty yards of a village called St. Benedict's, on the left bank of the river, where it was determined that the dis-embarkation should be effected. Her broad-side was turned towards the shore, and her guns, loaded with grape and round shot, were pointed at the beach, to cover the landing of the boats; and being moored fore and aft with spring-cables, she was altogether as manageable as if she had been under sail. The rest of the ships were several miles lower down the stream, some of them being aground at the distance of four leagues from this point; but the boats were quickly hoisted out from every one of them, and the river was covered in a trice, with a well-manned and warlike flotilla. The dis-embarkation was conducted with the greatest regularity and dispatch. Though the stream ran strong against them, and some of them were obliged to row fourteen or fifteen miles backwards and forwards, so strenuously did the sailors exert themselves, that by three o'clock in the afternoon the whole army was landed, and occupied a strong position about two miles above the village.

From what I have stated, respecting the gun brig, you will perceive that all things were in readiness to meet and repel any opposition that might be offered. Her broadside being pointed directly towards the village, rendered it impossible for the

enemy to bring down troops in that direction, and at the same time gave to our people an opportunity of forming, and thus being able to meet, in good order, whatever force might be posted to hinder their advance up the country. Had a few pieces of artillery been mounted, indeed, upon the high ground, afterwards taken possession of by us, some execution might have been done upon the boats, as they drew towards the beach; but even that would have been trifling, because, unless they had had leisure to heat their shot, no artillery in the open country could long stand before the fire of even a gun-brig, armed as this was, for the occasion, with long thirty-two pounders. Each boat-load of soldiers, likewise, drew up the moment they stepped on shore, forming line without any regard to companies or battalions; whilst parties were instantly dispatched to reconnoitre, and to take possession of every house, as well as to line every hedge, in front of the shore where their comrades were arriving. But these preparations, though no more than common prudence required, were unnecessary; since there was not only no opposition to the landing, but, apparently, no enemy within many miles of the place.

By the time the different regiments had occupied the ground allotted for them, the hospital and commissariat stores were brought up, and all the material property arranged, the day was too far

spent to permit an advance into a country, of the nature and military situation of which we were of course ignorant. The afternoon was accordingly devoted to a proper distribution of the force; which was divided into three brigades, in the following order.

The first, or light brigade, consisted of the 85th, the light infantry companies of the 4th, 21st, and 44th regiments, with the party of disciplined negroes, and a company of marines, amounting in all to about eleven hundred men; to the command of which Col. Thornton, of the 85th regiment, was appointed. The second brigade was composed of the 4th and 44th regiments, mustering together fourteen hundred and sixty bayonets; and was commanded by Col. Brooke, of the 44th; and the third was made up of the 21st, and the battalion of marines, equaling in number the second brigade, and commanded by Col. Patterson, of the 21st. The whole of the infantry may, therefore, be estimated at four thousand and twenty men. Besides these, were landed about an hundred artillery-men, and an equal number of drivers; but, for want of horses to drag them, no more than one six-pounder and two small three-pounder guns, were brought on shore. Except those belonging to the general and staff officers, there was not a single horse in the whole army. To have taken on shore a large park of artillery would have been, therefore, abso-

lute folly; since even the pieces which were landed, proved in the end of very little service, and were drawn by seamen sent from the different ships for that purpose. The sailors, thus employed, may be rated at an hundred, and those occupied in carrying stores, ammunition, and other necessaries, at an hundred more; and thus, by adding these, together with fifty sappers and miners, to the above amount, the whole number of men landed at St. Benedict's may be computed at four thousand five hundred.

This little army was posted upon a height which rises at the distance of two miles from the river. In front was a valley, cultivated for some way, and intersected with orchards; at the farther extremity of which the advanced piquets took their ground; pushing forward a chain of sentinels to the very skirts of the forest. The right of the position was protected by a farm-house with its inclosure and out-buildings, and the left rested upon the edge of the hill, or rather mound, which there abruptly ended. On the brow of the hill, and about the centre of the line, were placed the cannon, ready loaded, and having lighted fuses beside them; while the infantry bivouacked immediately under the ridge; that is, upon the slope of the hill which looked towards the shipping; in order to prevent their disposition from being seen by the enemy, should they come down to attack. But, as we were now in a country, where we could

not calculate upon being safe in rear, any more than in front, the chain of piquets was carried round both flanks, and so arranged, that no attempt could be made to get between the army and the fleet, without due notice, and time given to oppose and prevent it. Every thing, in short, was arranged with the utmost skill, and every chance of surprise provided against; but the night passed in quiet, nor was an opportunity afforded of evincing the very soldier-like dispositions which had been made.

LETTER VIII.

NEXT morning the troops, as is customary during a state of active warfare, were under arms an hour before day-light; and remained in position till after the sun had risen. It was then confidently expected that the column would be put in motion, though in what direction it was to proceed, or what was the object of the descent, none but the General himself appeared to know. A rumour, indeed, prevailed, that a flotilla of gun-boats upon the Patuxent, commanded by the American commodore Barney, was the point of attack; and that while the land force advanced up the river to prevent their retreat, armed boats from the fleet were to engage them in front. That such was in reality the primary object of the landing, I have every reason to believe, though circumstances afterwards occurred to bring about a change in the plan of operations. Into these, however, I shall not now enter, because they are in no way connected with the present stage of my narrative, but shall merely inform you, that in their expectations of an immediate advance, the troops were

disappointed. Whether it was that the arrangements had not been completed, or that intelligence respecting the state of the country, and the enemy's preparations, was wanting, I do not know; but the regiments returned to the ground which they had occupied during the night, and every thing resumed the same face which it had worn on the evening before.

In this state affairs continued till four o'clock in the afternoon, when the general suddenly made his appearance in the camp, the bugles sounded, and the regiments formed in order for marching. Nor did many minutes elapse before the word was given, and the army began to move, taking the direction of Nottingham, a town situated on the river, where it was understood that the flotilla lay at anchor. The march was conducted with the same caution and good order that had marked the choice of ground for encamping, and the disposition of the troops in position. The advanced guard consisting of three companies of infantry led the way. These, however, were preceded by a section of twenty men, moving before them at the distance of an hundred yards; and even these twenty were but the followers of two files, sent forward to prevent surprise, and to give warning of the approach of the enemy. Parallel with the head of the three companies marched the flank patroles; parties of forty or fifty men, which ex-

tending in files from each side of the road, swept the woods and fields to the distance of nearly half a mile. After the advanced guard, leaving an internal of an hundred, or an hundred and fifty yards, came the light brigade; which, as well as the advance, sent out flankers to secure itself against ambuscades. Next to it, again, marched the second brigade, moving steadily on, and leaving the skirmishing and reconnoitring to those in front; then came the artillery, consisting, as I have already stated, of one six and two three-pounder guns, drawn by seamen; and last of all came the third brigade, leaving a detachment at the same distance from the rear of the column, as the advanced guard was from its front.

In moving through an enemy's country, the journies of an army will, except under particular circumstances, be regulated by the nature of the ground over which it passes: thus, though eight, ten, or even twelve miles may be considered as a short day's march, yet if at the end of that space an advantageous position occur, (that is, a piece of ground well defended by natural or accidental barriers, and at the same time calculated for the operations of that species of force, of which the army may be composed) it would be the height of imprudence to push forward, merely because a greater extent of country might be traversed without fatiguing the troops. On the other hand, should

an army have proceeded for eighteen, twenty, or even twenty-five miles, without the occurrence of any such position, nothing except the prospect of losing a large proportion of his men from weariness, ought to induce a general to stop, until he has reached some spot at least more tenable than the rest. Our march to-day was, upon this principle, extremely short, the troops halting when they had arrived at a rising ground, distant not more than six miles from the point whence they had set out; and having stationed the piquets, planted the sentinels, and made such other arrangements as the case required, fires were lighted, and the men suffered to lie down.

It may seem strange, but it is nevertheless true, that during this short march of six miles, a greater number of soldiers dropped out of the ranks, and fell behind, from fatigue, than I recollect to have seen in any march in the Peninsula of thrice its duration. The fact is, that the men, from having been so long cooped up in ships, and unused to carry their baggage and arms, were become relaxed and enervated, to a degree altogether unnatural; and this, added to the excessive sultriness of the day, which exceeded any thing we had yet experienced, quite overpowered them. The load which they carried, likewise, was far from trifling, since, independent of their arms and sixty rounds of ball cartridge, each man bore upon his

back a knapsack, containing shirts, shoes, stockings, &c. a blanket, a haversack, with provisions for three days, and a canteen or wooden keg, filled with water. Under these circumstances, the occurrence of the position was extremely fortunate, since not only would the speedy failure of light have compelled a halt, whether the ground was favourable or the reverse; but even before darkness had come on, scarcely two-thirds of the soldiers would have been found in their places.

The ground upon which we bivouacked, though not remarkable for its strength, was precisely such as might tempt a general to halt, who found his men weary, and in danger of being benighted. It was a gentle eminence, fronted by an open and cultivated country, and crowned with two or three houses, having barns and walled gardens attached to them. Neither flank could be said to rest upon any point peculiarly well defended, but they were not exposed; because, by extending or condensing the line, almost any one of these houses might be converted into a protecting redoubt. The outposts, again, were so far arranged differently from those of yesterday, that, instead of covering only the front and the two extremities, they extended completely round the encampment, inclosing the entire army within a connected chain of sentinels; and precluding the possibility of even a single individual making his way within the lines, unperceived.

These precautions were, however, like those of the preceding day, unnecessary, no enemy making his appearance, even to reconnoitre; and yet it cannot be said that the night was passed in uninterrupted quiet, for the troops had scarcely lain down, when they were disturbed by a tremendous storm of thunder and lightning, accompanied by a heavy fall of rain. The effect of the lightning, as it glanced for a moment upon the bivouac, and displayed the firelocks piled in regular order, and the men stretched like so many corpses beside them, was extremely fine; the effect of the rain, however, was not so agreeable, for being perfectly destitute of shelter, we were speedily wet to the skin; and the remainder of our resting time was rendered thereby the reverse of comfortable. But the feeling of fretfulness natural on such an occasion, lasted no longer than till the day dawned, and the line of march was again formed; when their former good humour returning, and seasoned, in some degree, by the fatigues of yesterday, the troops moved on in excellent order, and in the highest spirits.

The route to-day was different, in many respects, from that of yesterday. In the first place, we had now got beyond the stretch of cultivation, and were proceeding through forests of immeasurable extent; this, of itself, gave a very different aspect to all around, because hitherto we had seen houses and

fields of corn on each side of the road, and now we could discover nothing but wild savannahs, apparently untenanted by a single human being. In the next place, we learnt from some of the country-people, who has been impressed as guides into our service, that numerous detached bodies of rifle-men lay in ambush amid the thickets; and the very expectation of something to do, created a degree of excitement which, till now, we had not experienced. In consequence of this information, the flank patroles were strengthened, and commanded to extend to a greater distance; the advanced guard marched at a greater interval from the head of the column, and the whole army moved forward with more caution and circumspection than had hitherto been used.

The low cunning which forms a leading trait in the American character, has long been proverbial; and the desire to over-reach and deceive, so universal among the people of that nation, is no less notorious: yet I had no conception, till experience taught me otherwise, that they would have the folly to bring these dispositions with them into the field. I am tempted to make these, perhaps illiberal remarks, by the remembrance of a little adventure which occurred to myself during this day's march, and which, as at the time it had something in it truly comical, I cannot resist the inclination of repeating, though aware that its title to drol-

lery must in a great measure be lost in the relation. Having been informed that in a certain part of the forest, a company of rifle-men had passed the night, I took with me a party of soldiers, and proceeded in the direction pointed out, with the hope of surprising them. On reaching the place, I found that they had retired, but I thought I could perceive something like the glitter of arms a little farther towards the middle of the wood. Sending several files of soldiers in different directions, I contrived to surround the spot, and then moving forward, I beheld two men dressed in black coats, and armed with bright firelocks, and bayonets, sitting under a tree; as soon as they observed me, they started up and took to their heels, but being hemmed in on all sides, they quickly perceived that to escape was impossible, and accordingly stood still. I hastened towards them, and having got within a few paces of where they stood, I heard the one say to the other, with a look of the most perfect simplicity, "Stop, John, till the gentlemen pass." There was something so ludicrous in this speech, and in the cast of countenance which accompanied it, that I could not help laughing aloud; nor was my mirth diminished by their attempts to persuade me that they were quiet country people, come out for no other purpose than to shoot squirrels. When I desired to know whether they carried bayonets to charge the squirrels, as well as musquets to shoot

them, they were rather at loss for a reply; but they grumbled exceedingly when they found themselves prisoners, and conducted as such to the column.

But to return to the principal narrative. The army had now advanced within a few miles of Nottingham, and the men were beginning to look forward, with some anxiety, to a halt; but as yet, nothing beyond the capture of a few stragglers had occurred to confirm the rumours which, in the morning, and during the whole of the march, had occasioned so much more circumspection than appeared to be requisite. The day was likewise far spent, and, as was to be expected, the ranks were beginning to be less carefully preserved, when a smart firing in the wood upon the right of the road, gave new life and energy to the soldiers. It was now confidently expected, that the enemy would make a stand. The column closed its order, ready to wheel into line in a moment, and every thing was on the *qui vive:* but it proved to be no more than a rencounter between a party of American rifle-men and the flank patrole. After firing a few shots, the enemy gave way, and our main body, which had continued to move on during the skirmish, came in without the slightest opposition, to the town of Nottingham.

We found this place (a town or large village, capable of containing from a thousand to fifteen

hundred inhabitants) completely deserted. Not an individual was to be seen in the streets, or remained in the houses; while the appearance of the furniture, &c., in some places the very bread left in the ovens, showed that it had been evacuated in great haste, and immediately before our arrival. The town itself stands upon the banks of the Patuxent, and consists of four short streets, two running parallel with the river, and two others crossing them at right angles. The houses are not such as indicate the wealth or grandeur of the owners, being in general built of wood, and little superior to cottages; but it is surrounded by others of a much better description, which convey the idea of good substantial farm-houses, a species of mansion very common in the United States. For several miles round, the country was in a high state of cultivation; but instead of the maize and wheat which we had hitherto seen, the fields were covered with an abundant and luxuriant crop of tobacco. This plant seems, indeed, to be at all times the staple commodity of that district; for, besides what was growing and unripe, we found numerous barns filled with the remains of last year's crop; the whole of which was of course seized in the name of His Majesty, King George the Third. But in the main object of our pursuit we were disappointed. The flotilla, which had been stationed opposite to Nottingham, retired, on our approach,

higher up the stream; and we were consequently in the situation of a huntsman who sees his hounds at fault, and has every reason to apprehend that his game will escape.

In this posture, the army continued during the night, having its right defended by the river, and its left extending considerably beyond the town; and secured, as usual, by a connected chain of outposts; nor was it put in motion, as had been done the day before, as soon as there was sufficient light to distinguish objects. There seemed indeed to be something like hesitation as to the course to be pursued,—whether to follow the gun-boats, or to return to the shipping; but, at last, the former proceeding was resolved upon, and the column set forward about eight o'clock, in the direction of Marlborough, another village, about ten miles beyond Nottingham. The road by which we travelled, as well to-day as during the whole of this excursion, was remarkably good; in some places rather heavy, from being cut through a sandy soil, but in general hard, dusty, and, to use an expressive phrase, having a sound bottom. Running, as it did, for the most part, through the heart of thick forests, it was also well sheltered from the rays of the sun; a circumstance which, in a climate like this, is of no slight importance. To day, our whole journey was of this description, nor did we reach a single cultivated spot till we approached the vicini-

ty of Marlborough; then indeed we found ourselves in a country not more fertile than beautiful. The ground which had been hitherto perfectly flat, was now broken into the most graceful swells, generally cleared of wood to within a short space of the summits, and then crowned with hoar and venerable forests. The village itself lies in a valley, formed by two such hills; the distance from the base of one hill to the base of the other, may be about two miles, the whole of which was laid out in fields of corn, hay, and tobacco, whilst the slopes themselves were covered with sheep, for whose support they furnished ample means. But Marlborough is not, like an English village, compact, and consisting of one or two lanes: the houses are scattered over the plain, and along the sides of the hills, at considerable intervals from one another, and are all surrounded by orchards and gardens, abounding in peaches and other fruits of the most delicious flavour. To add to the beauty of this place, a small rivulet makes its way through the bottom, and winding round the foot of one of these ridges, falls into the Patuxent, which flows at its back.

During our progress to-day, the same caution was observed which had been practised yesterday. Nor was it altogether unnecessary, several bodies of the enemy's horse occasionally showing themselves; and what appeared to be the rear guard of a column of infantry evacuating Marlborough, as

our advance entered. There was, however, little or no skirmishing, and we were allowed to remain in the village all night without molestation. But if we were not harassed, we were at least startled on the march by several heavy explosions. The cause of these we were at first unable to discover; but we soon learnt that they were occasioned by the blowing up of the very squadron of which we were in pursuit; which Commodore Barney, perceiving the impossibility of preserving, prudently destroyed, in order to prevent its falling into our hands.

In Marlborough we remained not only during the night, but till past noon on the following day. The hesitation which had caused the loss of a few hours at Nottingham, again interfered, and produced a delay which might have been attended with serious consequences. At length, however, orders were given to form, and we quitted Marlborough about two in the afternoon, taking the road to Washington. During this day's march, there was more skirmishing than had yet occurred. We had scarcely got above three miles from the village, when the advanced guard fell in with a party of riffle-men, who maintained a sharp contest before they gave way. The column, however, continued to move on without molestation, till arriving at a point where two roads meet, the one leading to Washington, the other to Alexandria, a strong body of troops, with some artillery, were

observed upon the slope of a height opposite. The capture of Washington was now the avowed object of our invasion, but the General, like an experienced officer, was desirous of keeping his enemy in the dark, as to his plan of operations. While the advanced guard, therefore, reinforced by two additional companies, marched directly forward to dislodge the party from the heights; the rest of the army wheeled to the left, taking the road which leads, not to Washington, but to Alexandria. These movements were not lost upon the enemy; who, observing by the dust in what direction the main body had filed off, immediately began to retreat, without waiting for the approach of the detachment sent against them. As they ascended the hill, however, they made a show of halting and forming a line. Our men moved steadily on, in column, covered by one company in extended order along the front, but the enemy having merely thrown a few round shot, with great precision, among the skirmishers, broke once again into marching order, and were quickly hid by the rising ground. As soon as they had disappeared, the advance halted; and having remained for about an hour on a little hill, to watch their motions, turned to the left, and followed the rest of the army, which they found advantageously posted at a place called Woodyard.

LETTER VIII.

I HAD almost forgotten to inform you, that from the first moment of our landing, the want of cavalry, so useful in obtaining information, and reconnoitring the open country, was very sensibly felt. To remedy this evil, as far as it could by such means be remedied, orders had been issued to catch and bring in all the horses that were found in the fields or stables of any houses along the road; and these orders being punctually obeyed, there were now fifty or sixty in the camp. Upon these some of the artillery drivers were mounted, and the command of the troop being given to an officer of experience, it was found of great service during the remainder of the march.

The advanced guard having joined the main body, the whole army, with the exception of a party which had been sent to the rear, to bring up a convoy of provisions, was now bivouacked upon a rising ground, well defended by hedge rows and thickets. The night, however, was not spent in as much quietness as usual. It was late before the troops got to the ground, consequently the piquets,

for want of light, could not be posted in their customary good order, neither had there been time to examine the country in the neighbourhood of the position. The out-posts were, therefore, kept in a state of constant anxiety by the frequent appearance of small parties of the enemy, who hovered about, probably with the design of cutting off stragglers, or perhaps of surprising, if they could, some of the piquets themselves. But whatever their intensions might be, the vigilance of the centries contrived to render them abortive, nor did any thing occur, during the night, productive of serious alarm; and the following day, being joined by the convoy which came up in safety, the column was again in motion, hastening across the country into the high road, which had been deserted for no other purpose than to mislead the Americans.

Having started, on the 24th, at an early hour, our march was, for some time, both cool and agreeable. The road, if road it could be called, wound for the first five miles through the heart of an immense forest, and being, in every sense of the word, a by-path, was completely overshadowed by projecting branches of trees, so closely interwoven, as to prevent a single sun-beam from making its way, even at noon, within the arch. We continued to move on, therefore, long after the sun had risen, without being sensible that there was

not a cloud in the sky to screen us from his influence; whilst a heavy moisture, continually emitted from the grass and weeds on both sides of us, produced a coolness, which, had it been less confined, would have been extremely pleasant. So far, then, we proceeded without experiencing any other inconvenience than what was produced by the damp and fœtid atmosphere which we breathed; but no sooner had we began to emerge from the woods, and to enter the open country, than an overpowering change was perceived. The sun, from which we had been hitherto defended, now beat upon us in full force; and the dust rising in thick masses from under our feet, without a breath of air to disperse it, flew directly into our faces, occasioning the greatest inconvenience both to the eyes and respiration. I have stated this to you, at length, because I do not recollect a period of my life when I suffered more severely from heat and fatigue; and as a journey of a few miles, under such circumstances, tells more than one of thrice the distance in a cool day, and along a firm wintry road, you cannot wonder that before many hours had elapsed, numbers of men began to fall behind, from absolute inability to keep up.

Yet, in spite of all this, there was that in to-day's march which rendered it infinitely more interesting than any we had performed since the landing. We had learnt, from various quarters, that the enemy

was concentrating his forces for the purpose of hazarding a battle in defence of his capital. The truth of these rumours we had no cause to doubt, confirmed as they were by what we had ourselves witnessed only the evening before, and the aspect of various fields on each side of the high road, (which we had now regained,) where smoking ashes, bundles of straw, and remnants of broken victuals were scattered about, indicated that considerable bodies of troops had passed the night in this neighbourhood. The appearance of the road itself, likewise, imprinted as it was with fresh marks of many feet and hoofs, proved that these troops could be no great way before us; whilst our very proximity to Washington, being now distant from it not more than ten or twelve miles, all tended to assure us, that we should at least see an American army before dark.

It was now that we experienced the great usefulness of our badly mounted troopers, or as they were called by the private soldiers, our cossacks. The country, from being extremely close, had become open on every side to a considerable extent, although thick groves, instead of hedges, frequently separated one field from another. This was exactly the ground on which cavalry could act with advantage; because they might lie in ambush behind these groves, totally unperceived, and when an opportunity offered, charge the column, before

it had time to prepare for their reception. There were one or two places, indeed, where such events were confidently anticipated; whole rows of paling having been pulled up from the side of the road, and open spaces left, through which several squadrons of horse might gallop; and the consequence was that every man held his breath in expectation, and prepared himself to form square in a moment. It was here, I say, that the mounted drivers became peculiarly useful. They were divided into small parties of six or eight, and sent out in different directions to reconnoitre, two of them generally taking post at every suspicious corner, that one might give notice to the column, while the other watched the motions of an enemy.

It so happened that these precautions were unnecessary, for whatever might be the strength of the Americans in cavalry, their General did not think fit to employ it in harassing our march. But the very knowledge that every danger was provided against, and that they could not be attacked without having time to make ready, gave to the soldiers a degree of steady confidence which they would otherwise have wanted; and the want of which, had the case been different, might have been productive of disorder at a moment when good order was of vital importance.

We had now proceeded about nine miles, during the last four of which the sun's rays had beat con-

tinually upon us, and we had inhaled almost as great a quantity of dust as of air. Numbers of men had already fallen to the rear, and many more could with difficulty keep up; consequently, if we pushed on much further without resting, the chances were that at least one half of the army would be left behind. To prevent this from happening, and to give time for the stragglers to overtake the column, an halt was determined upon, and being led forward to a spot of ground well wooded, and watered by a stream which crossed the road, the troops were ordered to refresh themselves. Perhaps no halt ever arrived more seasonably than this, or bid fair to be productive of more beneficial effects; and yet so oppressive was the heat, that we had not resumed our march above an hour, when the banks by the way side were again covered with stragglers; some of the finest and stoutest men in the army being literally unable to go on.

The hour of noon was approaching, when a heavy cloud of dust, apparently not more than two or three miles distant, attracted our attention. From whence it originated there was little difficulty in guessing, nor did many minutes expire before surmise was changed into certainty; for on turning a sudden angle in the road, and passing a small plantation, which obstructed the vision towards the left, the British and American armies

became visible to one another. The position occupied by the latter was one of great strength, and commanding attitude. They were drawn up in three lines upon the brow of a hill, having their front and left flank covered by a branch of the Potomac, and their right resting upon a thick wood and a deep ravine. This river, which may be about the breadth of the Isis at Oxford, flowed between the heights occupied by the American forces, and the little town of Bladensburgh.—Across it was thrown a narrow bridge, extending from the chief street in that town to the continuation of the road, which passed through the very centre of their position; and its right bank (the bank above which they were drawn up) was covered with a narrow stripe of willows and larch trees, whilst the left was altogether bare, low, and exposed. Such was the general aspect of their position as at the first glance it presented itself; of which I must endeavour to give a more detailed account, that my description of the battle may be in some degree intelligible.

I have said that the right bank of the Potomac was covered with a narrow stripe of willow and larch trees. Here the Americans had stationed strong bodies of riflemen, who, in skirmishing order, covered the whole front of their army. Behind this narrow plantation, again, the fields were open and clear, intersected, at certain distances,

by rows of high and strong palings. About the middle of the ascent, and in the rear of one of these rows, stood the first line, composed entirely of infantry; at a proper interval from this, and in a similar situation, stood the second line; while the third, or reserve, was posted within the skirts of a wood, which crowned the heights. The artillery, again, of which they had twenty pieces in the field, was thus arranged: on the high road, and commanding the bridge, stood two heavy guns; and four more, two on each side of the road, swept partly in the same direction, and partly down the whole of the slope into the streets of Bladensburg. The rest were scattered, with no great judgment, along the second line of infantry, occupying different spaces between the right of one regiment, and the left of another; while the cavalry showed itself in one mass, within a stubble field, near the extreme left of the position. Such was the nature of the ground which they occupied, and the formidable posture in which they waited our approach; amounting, by their own account, to nine thousand men, a number exactly doubling that of the force which was to attack them.

In the mean time, our column continued to advance in the same order which it had hitherto preserved. The road conducted us for about two miles in a direction parallel with the river, and of consequence with the enemy's line; when it sud-

denly turned, and led directly towards the town of Bladensburg. Being of course ignorant whether this town might not be filled with American troops, the main body paused here, till the advanced guard should reconnoitre. The result proved that no opposition was intended in that quarter, and that the whole of the enemy's army had been withdrawn to the opposite side of the stream, whereupon the army was again put in motion, and in a short time arrived in the streets of Bladensburg, and within range of the American artillery. Immediately on our reaching this point, several of their guns opened upon us, and kept up a quick and well directed cannonade, from which, as we were again commanded to halt, the men were directed to shelter themselves as much as possible behind the houses. The object of this halt, it was conjectured, was to give the General an opportunity of examining the American line, and of trying the depth of the river; because at present there appeared to be but one practicable mode of attack, by crossing the bridge, and taking the enemy directly in front. To do so, however, exposed as the bridge was, must be atteded with bloody consequences, nor could the delay of a few minutes produce any mischief which the discovery of a ford would not amply compensate.

But in this conjecture we were altogether mistaken; for without allowing time to the column

to close its ranks or to be formed by some of the many stragglers, who were now hurrying, as fast as weariness would permit, to regain their places, the order to halt was countermanded, and the word given to attack; and we immediately pushed on at double quick time, towards the head of the bridge. While we were moving along the street, a continued fire was kept up, with some execution, from those guns which stood to the left of the road; but it was not till the bridge was covered with our people that the two-gun battery upon the road itself began to play. Then, indeed, it also opened, and with tremendous effect; for at the first discharge almost an entire company was swept down; but whether it was that the guns had been previously laid with measured exactness, or that the nerves of the gunners became afterwards unsteady, the succeeding discharges were much less fatal. The riflemen likewise now galled us from the wooded bank, with a running fire of musketry; and it was not without trampling upon many of their dead and dying comrades, that the light brigade established itself on the opposite side of the stream.

When once there, however, every thing else appeared easy. Wheeling off to the right and left of the road, they dashed into the thicket, and quickly cleared it of the American skirmishers; who falling back with precipitation upon the first line, threw it into disorder before it had fired a

shot. The consequence was, that our troops had scarcely shown themselves when the whole of that line gave way, and fled in the greatest confusion, leaving the two guns upon the road in possession of the victors.

But here it must be confessed that the light brigade was guilty of imprudence. Instead of pausing till the rest of the army came up, they lightened themselves by throwing away their knapsacks and haversacks; and extending their ranks so as to show an equal front with the enemy, pushed on to the attack of the second line. The Americans, however, saw their weakness, and stood firm, and having the whole of their artillery, with the exception of those captured on the road, and the greater part of their infantry in this line, they first checked the ardour of the assailants by a heavy fire, and then in their turn, advanced to recover the ground which was lost. Against this charge, the extended order of the British troops would not permit them to offer an effectual resistance, and they were accordingly borne back to the very thicket upon the river's brink; where they maintained themselves with determined obstinacy, repelling all attempts to drive them through it; and frequently following, to within a short distance of the cannon's mouth, such parts of the enemy's line as gave way.

In this state the action continued till the second brigade had likewise crossed, and formed upon the

right bank of the river; when the 44th Regiment moving to the right, and driving in the skirmishers, debouched upon the left flank of the Americans, and completely turned it. In that quarter, therefore, the battle was won: because the raw militia-men, who were stationed there as being the least assailable point, when once broken could not be rallied. But on their right, the enemy still kept their ground with much resolution; nor was it till the arrival of the 4th Regiment, and the advance of the British forces in firm array, to the charge, that they began to waver. Then, indeed, seeing their left in full flight, and the 44th getting in their rear, they lost all order, and dispersed, leaving clouds of riflemen to cover their retreat; and hastened to conceal themselves in the woods, where it would have been vain to follow them. The rout was now general throughout the whole line. The reserve, which ought to have supported the main body, fled as soon as those in its front began to give way; and the cavalry, instead of charging the British troops, now scattered in pursuit, turned their horses' heads and galloped off, leaving them in undisputed possession of the field, and of ten out of the twenty pieces of artillery.

This battle, by which the fate of the American capital was decided, began about one o'clock in the afternoon, and lasted till four. The loss on the part of the English was severe, since, out of

two-thirds of the army, which were engaged, upwards of five hundred men were killed and wounded; and what rendered it doubly severe was, that among these were numbered several officers of rank and distinction. Colonel Thornton who commanded the light brigade; Lieutenant Colonel Wood commanding the 85th Regiment, and Major Brown who had led the advanced guard, were all severely wounded; and General Ross himself had a horse shot under him. On the side of the Americans the slaughter was not so great. Being in possession of a strong position, they were of course less exposed in defending, than the others in storming it; and had they conducted themselves with coolness, and resolution, it is not conceivable how the day could have been won. But the fact is, that, with the exception of a party of sailors from the gun boats, under the command of Commodore Barney, no troops could behave worse than they did. The skirmishers were driven in as soon as attacked, the first line gave way without offering the slightest resistance, and the left of the main body was broken within half an hour after it was seriously engaged. Of the sailors, however, it would be injustice not to speak in the terms which their conduct merits. They were employed as gunners, and not only did they serve their guns with a quickness and precision which astonished

their assailants, but they stood till some of them were actually bayonetted, with fuses in their hands; nor was it till their leader was wounded and taken, and they saw themselves deserted on all sides by the soldiers, that they quitted the field. With respect to the British army, again, no line of distinction can be drawn. All did their duty, and none more gallantly than the rest; and though the brunt of the affair fell upon the light brigade, this was owing chiefly to the circumstance of its being at the head of the column, and perhaps, also, in some degree, to its own rash impetuosity. The artillery, indeed, could do little; being unable to show itself in presence of a force so superior; but the six-pounder was nevertheless brought into action, and a corps of rockets proved of striking utility.

Our troops being worn down from fatigue, and of course as ignorant of the country, as the Americans were the reverse, the pursuit could not be continued to any distance. Neither was it attended with much slaughter. Diving into the recesses of the forests, and covering themselves with riflemen, the enemy were quickly beyond our reach; and having no cavalry to scour even the high road, ten of the lightest of their guns were carried off in the flight. The defeat, however, was absolute, and the army, which had been collected

for the defence of Washington, was scattered beyond the possibility of, at least, an immediate reunion; and as the distance from Bladensburg to that city does not exceed four miles, there appeared to be no further obstacle in the way, to prevent its immediate capture.

LETTER X.

An opportunity so favourable was not endangered by any needless delay. While the two brigades which had been engaged, remained upon the field to recover their order, the third, which had formed the reserve, and was consequently unbroken, took the lead, and pushed forward at a rapid rate towards Washington.

As it was not the intention of the British government to attempt permanent conquests in this part of America; and as the General was well aware that, with a handful of men, he could not pretend to establish himself, for any length of time, in an enemy's capital, he determined to lay it under contribution, and to return quietly to the shipping. Nor was there any thing unworthy of the character of a British officer, in this determination. By all the customs of war, whatever public property may chance to be in a captured town, becomes, confessedly, the just spoil of the conqueror; and in thus proposing to accept a certain sum of money in lieu of that property, he was showing mercy, rather than severity, to the vanquished. It is true, that if they chose to reject his terms, he

and his army would be deprived of their booty, because, without some more convenient mode of transporting it than we possessed, even the portable part of the property itself could not be removed. But, on the other hand, there was no difficulty in destroying it; and thus, though we should gain nothing, the American government would lose probably to a much greater amount than if they had agreed to purchase its preservation by the money demanded.

Such being the intention of General Ross, he did not march the troops immediately into the city, but halted them upon a plain in its immediate vicinity, whilst a flag of truce was sent in with terms. But whatever his proposal might have been, it was not so much as heard; for scarcely had the party bearing the flag entered the street, than they were fired upon from the windows of one of the houses, and the horse of the General himself, who accompanied them, killed. You will easily believe, that conduct so unjustifiable, so direct a breach of the law of nations, roused the indignation of every individual, from the General himself down to the private soldier. All thoughts of accommodation were instantly laid aside; the troops advanced forthwith into the town, and having first put to the sword all who were found in the house from which the shots were fired, and reduced it to ashes, they proceeded, without a

moment's delay, to burn and destroy every thing in the most distant degree connected with government. In this general devastation were included the Senate-house, the President's palace, an extensive dock-yard and arsenal, barracks for two or three thousand men, several large store-houses filled with naval and military stores, some hundreds of cannon of different descriptions, and nearly twenty thousand stand of small arms. There were also two or three public rope-works which shared the same fate, a fine frigate pierced for sixty guns, and just ready to be launched, several gun-brigs and armed schooners, with a variety of gun-boats and small craft. The powder magazines were of course set on fire, and exploded with a tremendous crash, throwing down many houses in their vicinity, partly by pieces of the walls striking them, and partly by the concussion of the air; whilst quantities of shot, shell, and hand-grenades, which could not otherwise be rendered useless, were thrown into the river. In destroying the cannon, a method was adopted, which I had never before witnessed, and which, as it was both effectual and expeditious, I cannot avoid relating. One gun of rather a small calibre, was pitched upon as the executioner of the rest; and being loaded with ball, and turned to the muzzles of the others, it was fired, and thus beat out their breechings. Many, however, not being mounted, could not be

thus dealt with; these were spiked, and having their trunnions knocked off, were afterwards cast into the bed of the river.

All this was as it should be, and had the arm of vengeance been extended no farther, there would not have been room given for so much as a whisper of disapprobation. But unfortunately, it did not stop here; a noble library, several printing offices, and all the national archives were likewise committed to the flames, which, though no doubt the property of government, might better have been spared. It is not, however, my intention to join the outcry, which will probably be raised, against what they will term a line of conduct at once barbarous and unprofitable. Far from it; on the contrary, I cannot help admiring the forbearance and humanity of the British troops, since, irritated as they had every right to be, they spared as far as was possible, all private property, not a single house in the place being plundered or destroyed, except that from which the general's horse had been killed; and those which were accidentally thrown down by the explosion of the magazines.

While the third brigade was thus employed, the rest of the army, having recalled its stragglers, and removed the wounded into Bladensburg, began its march towards Washington. Though the battle was ended by four o'clock, the sun had set before the different regiments were in a condition to

move, consequently this short journey was performed in the dark. The work of destruction had also begun in the city, before they quitted their ground; and the blazing of houses, ships, and stores, the report of exploding magazines, and the crash of falling roofs, informed them, as they proceeded, of what was going forward. You can conceive nothing finer than the sight which met them as they drew near to the town. The sky was brilliantly illumined by the different conflagrations; and a dark red light was thrown upon the road, sufficient to permit each man to view distinctly his comrade's face. Except the burning of St. Sebastian's, I do not recollect to have witnessed, at any period of my life, a scene more striking or more sublime.

Having advanced as far as the plain, where the reserve had previously paused, the first and second brigades halted; and, forming into close column, passed the night in bivouack. At first, this was agreeable enough, because the air was mild, and weariness made up for what was wanting in comford. But towards morning, a violent storm of rain, accompanied with thunder and lightning, came on, which disturbed the rest of all those who were exposed to it. Yet, in spite of the disagreeableness of getting wet, I cannot say that I felt disposed to grumble at the interruption, for it appeared that what I had before considered as super-

latively sublime, still wanted this to render it complete. The flashes of lightning seemed to vie in brilliancy, with the flames which burst from the roofs of burning houses, while the thunder drowned the noise of crumbling walls, and was only interrupted by the occasional roar of cannon, and of large depots of gunpowder, as they one by one exploded.

I need scarcely observe, that the consternation of the inhabitants was complete, and that to them this was a night of terror. So confident had they been of the success of their troops, that few of them had dreamt of quitting their houses, or abandoning the city; nor was it till the fugitives from the battle began to rush in, filling every place as they came with dismay, that the President himself thought of providing for his safety. That gentleman, as I was credibly informed, had gone forth in the morning with the army, and had continued among his troops till the British forces began to make their appearance. Whether the sight of his enemies cooled his courage or not, I cannot say, but, according to my informer, no sooner was the glittering of our arms discernible, than he began to discover that his presence was more wanted in the senate than with the army; and having ridden through the ranks, and exhorted every man to do his duty, he hurried back to his own house, that he might prepare a feast for the entertainment of his officers, when they should

return victorious. For the truth of these details, I will not be answerable; but this much I know, that the feast was actually prepared, though, instead of being devoured by American officers, it went to satisfy the less delicate appetites of a party of English soldiers. When the datachment, sent out to destroy Mr. Madison's house, entered his dining parlour, they found a dinner-table spread, and covers laid for forty guests. Several kinds of wine, in handsome cut-glass decanters, were cooling on the side-board; plate-holders stood by the fire-place, filled with dishes and plates; knives, forks and spoons, were arranged for immediate use; in short, every thing was ready for the entertainment of a ceremonious party. Such were the arrangements in the dining-room, whilst in the kitchen were others answerable to them in every respect. Spits, loaded with joints of various sorts, turned before the fire; pots, saucepans, and other culinary utensils, stood upon the grate; and all the other requisites for an elegant and substantial repast, were exactly in a state which indicated that they had been lately and precipitately abandoned.

You will readily imagine, that these preparations were beheld, by a party of hungry soldiers, with no indifferent eye. An elegant dinner, even though considerably over-dressed, was a luxury to which few of them, at least for some time back, had been

accustomed; and which, after the dangers and fatigues of the day, appeared peculiarly inviting. They sat down to it, therefore, not indeed in the most orderly manner, but with countenances which would not have disgraced a party of aldermen at a civic feast; and having satisfied their appetites with fewer complaints than would have probably escaped their rival *gourmands*, and partaken pretty freely of the wines, they finished by setting fire to the house which had so liberally entertained them.

But, as I have just observed, this was a night of dismay to the inhabitants of Washington. They were taken completely by surprise; nor could the arrival of the flood be more unexpected to the natives of the antediluvian world, than the arrival of the British army to them. The first impulse of course tempted them to fly, and the streets were in consequence crowded with soldiers and senators, men, women and children, horses, carriages, and carts loaded with household furniture, all hastening towards a wooden bridge which crosses the Potomac. The confusion thus occasioned was terrible, and the crowd upon the bridge was such as to endanger its giving way. But Mr. Madison, having escaped among the first, was no sooner safe on the opposite bank of the river, than he gave orders that the bridge should be broken down; which being obeyed, the rest were obliged

to return, and to trust to the clemency of the victors.

In this manner was the night passed by both parties; and at day-break next morning, the light brigade moved into the city, while the reserve fell back to a height, about half a mile in the rear. Little, however, now remained to be done, because every thing marked out for destruction, was already consumed. Of the senate-house, the President's palace, the barracks, the dock-yard, &c. nothing could be seen, except heaps of smoking ruins; and even the bridge, a noble structure upwards of a mile in length, was almost wholly demolished. There was, therefore, no farther occasion to scatter the troops, and they were accordingly kept together as much as possible on the Capitol hill.

Of the city of Washington, I have purposely declined attempting any minute description, because it possesses no leading features, by catching which one might convey to a person who has not seen it, something like an accurate notion of the whole. It is, as you are well aware, completely in its infancy, few of the streets being finished, and many containing not more than three or four houses at wide intervals from each other. But from its situation, it derives every possible advantage, and if it continue to be the capital of the United States for another century, it will become, I doubt not, one of the most flourishing cities in

the world. America is, and always will be, a commercial nation, nor can a single town throughout the whole of that vast continent boast of a better harbour than Washington. It stands upon the Potomac, one of the most navigable of all the rivers that empty themselves into the Chesapeake; the depth of which is sufficient to float a frigate for some way above the town; it therefore possesses many facilities for the carrying on of an extensive trade; whilst its distance from the coast is such as to place it, in a great measure, beyond reach of insult from an enemy. To state this latter as one of its advantages, may appear paradoxical in one who has just related the particulars of its capture; but the truth is, that this capture was brought about more by the extreme folly of the American government, and their absurd confidence that it would never be attempted, than by any other cause. Had the emergency been contemplated, and in a proper manner provided against, or had any skill and courage been displayed in retarding the progress of our troops, the design, if formed at all, would have been either abandoned immediately, or must have ended in the total destruction of the invaders.

Like other infant towns, it is but little ornamented with fine buildings; for, except the Senate house, I really know of none worthy to be noticed. This, however, is, or rather was, an edifice of great

beauty. It stood, where its ruins now stand, upon a mound called the Capitol hill, and near a trifling stream named the Tiber; from which circumstances, these modern republicans are led to flatter themselves, that the days are coming when it will rival in power and grandeur the senate-house of ancient Rome herself. It was built entirely of free-stone, tastefully worked and highly polished; and, besides its numerous windows, was lighted from the top by a large and handsome cupola. Perhaps it could not be said to belong to any decided style of architecture; but its *tout-ensemble* was light, airy, and elegant. After traversing a wide and spacious entrance-hall, you arrived at the foot of a handsome spiral hanging staircase; on the right of which were two magnificent apartments, one above the other, which were occupied as sitting chambers, by the two houses of representatives. From these branched off several smaller rooms, fitted up as offices, and probably used as such by the various officers of the state. On the right of the staircase, again, were two other apartments equal in size to those on the left, with a like number of smaller rooms, branching off from them. These were furnished as a public library, the two larger being well stocked with valuable books, principally in modern languages, and the others filled with archives, national statutes, acts of legislature, &c. and used as the private rooms of the librarians.

The President's house, on the other hand, though likewise a public building, was remarkable for nothing, except the want of taste exhibited in its structure. It was small, incommodious, and plain; in no respect likely to excite the jealousy of a people peculiarly averse to all pomp or parade, even in their chief magistrate. Besides these, there were also a custom-house, several banking-houses, and a school or college, all claiming to themselves the distinction of public works; but in them there was a plainness amounting almost to coarseness, and a general air of republicanism, by no means imposing. If you ask me respecting the number of inhabitants which Washington contains, I confess that I cannot pretend to answer the question with any exactness, but from the extent of ground covered by what is considered as the town, I should say somewhere about sixty thousand. Georgetown, the quarter where the President's house stood, is compact and regular, containing, I should conceive, at least twenty thousand souls within itself; nor can the population of the other quarters be estimated at less than double that number.

Such is the city of Washington, of which our hasty and unfriendly visit did not allow us to take a very minute account. I return, therefore, to our own movements.

I have stated above, that our troops were this day kept as much together as possible upon the

Capitol hill. But it was not alone on account of the completion of their destructive labours, that this was done. A powerful army of Americans already began to show themselves upon some heights, at the distance of two or three miles from the city; and as they sent out detachments of horse even to the very suburbs, for the purpose of watching our motions, it would have been unsafe to permit more straggling than was absolutely necessary. The army which we had overthrown the day before, though defeated, was far from annihilated; and having by this time recovered its panic, began to concentrate itself in our front; and presented quite as formidable an appearance as ever. We learnt, also, that it was joined by a considerable force from the back settlements, which had arrived too late to take part in the action, and the report was, that both combined, amounted to nearly twelve thousand men.

Whether or not it was their intention to attack, I cannot pretend to say, because it was noon before they showed themselves; and soon after, when something like a movement could be discerned in their ranks, the sky grew suddenly dark, and the most tremendous hurricane, ever remembered by the oldest inhabitant in the place, came on. Of the prodigious force of the wind, it is impossible for you to form any conception. Roofs of houses were torn off by it, and whisked into the air like

sheets of paper; while the rain which accompanied it, resembled the rushing of a mighty cataract, rather than the dropping of a shower. The darkness was as great as if the sun had long set, and the last remains of twilight had come on, occasionally relieved by flashes of vivid lightning streaming through it, which, together with the noise of the wind and the thunder, the crash of falling buildings, and the tearing of roofs as they were stript from the walls, produced the most appalling effect I ever have, and probably ever shall, witness. This lasted for nearly two hours without intermission; during which time, many of the houses spared by us, were blown down; and thirty of our men, besides several of the inhabitants, buried beneath their ruins. Our column was as completely dispersed, as if it had received a total defeat; some of the men flying for shelter behind walls and buildings, and others falling flat upon the ground. to prevent themselves from being carried away by the tempest; nay, such was the violence of the wind, that two pieces of cannon which stood upon the eminence, were fairly lifted from the ground, and borne several yards to the rear.

LETTER XI.

When the hurricane had blown over, the camp of the Americans appeared to be in as great a state of confusion as our own; nor could either party recover themselves sufficiently during the rest of the day, to try the fortune of a battle. Of this, General Ross did not fail to take advantage. He had already attained all that he could hope, and perhaps more than he originally expected to attain; consequently, to risk another action, would only be to spill blood for no purpose. Whatever might be the issue of the contest, he could derive from it no advantage. If he were victorious, it would not destroy the necessity which existed of evacuating Washington; if defeated, his ruin was certain. To avoid fighting was, therefore, his object, and perhaps he owed its accomplishment to the fortunate occurrence of the storm. Be that, however, as it may, a retreat was resolved upon; and we now only waited for night, to put the resolution into practice.

There was, however, one difficulty to be surmounted in this proceeding. Of the wounded, many were so ill, as to preclude all possibility of

their removal, and to leave them in the hands of an enemy whom we had beaten, was rather a mortifying anticipation. But for this there was no help; and it now only remained to make the best arrangements for their comfort, and to secure for them, as far as could be done, civil treatment from the Americans.

It chanced, that among other prisoners taken at Bladensburg, was Commodore Barney, an American officer of much gallantry and high sense of honour. Being himself wounded, he was the more likely to feel for those who were in a similar condition, and having received the kindest treatment from our medical attendants, as long as he continued under their hands, he became, without solicitation, the friend of his fellow-sufferers. To him, as well as to the other prisoners, was given his parole, and to his care were our wounded, in a peculiar manner, intrusted, a trust which he received with the utmost willingness, and discharged with the most praiseworthy exactness. Among other terms, it was agreed between him and General Ross, that such of our people as were left behind, should be considered as prisoners of war, and should be restored to us, as soon as they were able to travel; when he and his countrymen would, in exchange, be released from their engagements.

As soon as these arrangements were completed, and darkness had come on, the third brigade,

which was posted in the rear of our army, began its retreat. Then followed the guns, afterwards the second, and last of all the light brigade, exactly reversing the order which had been maintained during the advance. Instead of an advanced guard, this last now furnished a party to cover the retreat, and the whole procession was closed by the mounted drivers.

It being matter of great importance to deceive the enemy, and to prevent pursuit, the rear of the column d d not quit its ground upon the Capitol till a late hour. During the day, an order had been issued that none of the inhabitants should be seen in the streets after eight o'clock; and as fear renders most men obedient, this order was punctually attended to. All the horses belonging to different officers, had likewise been removed to drag the guns, nor was any one allowed to ride, lest a neigh, or even the trampling of hoofs, should excite suspicion. The fires were trimmed, and made to blaze bright; and fuel enough left to keep them so for some hours; and finally, about half past nine o'clock, the troops formed in marching order, and moved off in the most profound silence. Not a word was spoken, nor a single individual permitted to step one inch out of his place, and thus they passed along the streets perfectly unnoticed, and cleared the town without any alarm being given. You will imagine that our pace was

none of the most tardy, consequently it was not long before we reached the ground which had been occupied by the other brigades. Here we found a second line of fires blazing in the same manner as those deserted by ourselves; and the same precautions, in every respect, adopted to induce a belief that our army was still quiet. Beyond these, again, we found two or three solitary fires, placed in such order as to resemble those of a chain of piquets. In short, the deception was so well managed, that even we ourselves were at first doubtful whether the rest of the troops had withdrawn.

By the time we reached the ground where yesterday's battle had been fought, the moon rose, and exhibited a spectacle by no means enlivening. The dead were still unburied, and lay about in every direction, completely naked. They had been stripped even of their shirts, and having been exposed in this state to the violent rain in the morning, they appeared to be bleached to a most unnatural degree of whiteness. The heat and rain together, had likewise affected them in a different manner; and the smell which arose upon the night air, was horrible.

There is something, in such a scene as this, extremely humbling, and repugnant to the feelings of human nature. During the agitation of a battle, it is nothing to see men fall in hundreds by your

side. You may look at them, perhaps, for an instant, but you do so almost without being yourself aware of it, so completely are your thoughts carried away by the excitation of the moment, and the shouts of your companions. But when you come to view the dead in an hour of calmness, stripped as they generally are, you cannot help remembering how frail may have been the covering which saved yourself from being the loathsome thing on which you are now gazing. For myself, I confess that these reflections rose within my mind on the present occasion; and if any one should say, that, similarly situated, they would not rise in his, I should give him no credit for a superior degree of courage, but might perhaps be inclined to despise him for his want of the common feelings of a reasonable being.

In Bladensburg, the brigade halted for an hour, while those men who had thrown away their knapsacks endeavoured to recover them. During this interval, I strolled up to a house which had been converted into an hospital, and paid a hasty visit to the wounded. I found them in great pain, and some of them deeply affected at the thought of being abandoned by their comrades, and left to the mercy of their enemies. Yet, in their apprehension of evil treatment from the Americans, the event proved that they had done injustice to that people; who were found to possess at least one

generous trait in their character, namely, that of behaving kindly and attentively to their prisoners.

As soon as the stragglers had returned to their ranks, we again moved on, continuing to march without once stopping to rest, during the whole of the night. Of the fatigue of a night march, none but those who have experienced it, can form the smallest conception. Oppressed with the most intolerable drowsiness, we were absolutely dozing upon our legs; and if any check at the head of the column caused a momentary delay, the road was instantly covered with men fast asleep. It is generally acknowledged, that no inclination is so difficult to resist, as the inclination to sleep; but when you are compelled not only to bear up against this, but to struggle also with weariness, and to walk at the same time, it is scarcely possible to hold out long. By seven o'clock in the morning, it was therefore absolutely necessary to pause, because numbers had already fallen behind, and numbers more were ready to follow their example; when throwing ourselves upon the ground, almost in the same order in which we had marched, in less than five minutes there was not a single unclosed eye throughout the whole brigade. Piquets were of course stationed, and sentinels placed, to whom no rest was granted, but except these, the entire army resembled a heap of dead bodies on a field of battle, rather than living men.

In this situation we remained till noon, when we were again roused to continue the retreat. Though the sun was oppressively powerful, we moved on without resting till dark, when having arrived at our old position near Marlborough, we halted for the night. During this day's march, we were joined by numbers of negro slaves, who implored us to take them along with us, offering to serve either as soldiers or sailors, if we would but give them their liberty; but as General Ross persisted in protecting private property of every description, few of them were fortunate enough to obtain their wishes.

We had now proceeded a distance of thirty-five miles, and began to consider ourselves beyond the danger of pursuit. The remainder of the retreat was therefore conducted with more leisure; our next march carrying us no farther than Nottingham, where we remained during an entire day, for the purpose of resting the troops. It cannot, however, be said, that this resting time was spent in idleness. A gun-brig, with a number of ships, launches, and long boats, had made their way up the stream, and were at anchor opposite to the town On board the former were carried such of the wounded as had been able to travel, while the latter were loaded with flour and tobacco, the only spoil which we found it possible to bring off.

While the infantry were thus employed, the

cavalry was sent back as far as Marlborough, to discover whether there were any American forces in pursuit; and it was well for the few stragglers who had been left behind, that this recognizance was made. Though there appeared to be no disposition on the part of the American general to follow our steps, and to harass the retreat, the inhabitants of that village, at the instigation of a medical practitioner called Bean, had risen in arms as soon as we were departed; and falling upon such individuals as strayed from the column, put some of them to death, and made others prisoners. A soldier whom they had taken, and who had escaped, gave this information to the troopers, just as they were about to return to head quarters; upon which they immediately wheeled about, and galloping into the village, pulled the doctor out of his bed, (for it was early in the morning,) and compelled him, by a threat of instant death, to liberate his prisoners; and mounting him before one of the party, brought him in triumph to the camp.

The wounded, the artillery, and plunder, being all embarked on the 28th, at day-break on the 29th we took the direction of St. Benedict's, where we arrived, without any adventure, at a late hour in the evening. Here we again occupied the ground of which we had taken possession on first landing, passing the night in perfect quiet; and next day, the boats of the fleet being ready

to receive us, the regiments, one by one, marched down to the beach. We found the shore covered with sailors from the different ships of war, who welcomed our arrival with loud cheers; and having contrived to bring up a larger flotilla than had been employed in the disembarkation, they removed us within a few hours, and without the occurrence of any accident, to our respective vessels.

Having now detailed the particulars of this brilliant expedition, I may perhaps be pardoned, if I finish the present letter with a military review of the conduct of both armies during its continuance. In doing so, however, I am far from wishing to assume to myself any peculiar knowledge in these matters. The remarks which I shall make, are exactly such as would be made by any man, whether a soldier or not, possessed of the slightest degree of penetration; because the errors committed, as well as the skill displayed, even by the British general, were too apparent to escape notice.

To begin, then, with the conquerors. The great error of General Ross appears to have been a want of sufficient confidence in himself. Nor is it surprising that he was thus diffident; because, though an officer of great courage and considerable experience, his service had been hitherto performed in a subordinate situation. As general of brigade under Lord Wellington, he had no doubt learnt

the art of war in an excellent school; but he had, as yet, learned only to obey; and being thus suddenly called upon to trust solely to his own resources, it would have been strange had he not been in some degree apprehensive of the event. A general of brigade, as every one knows, is oppressed with no more responsibility than a colonel commanding a battalion. Whatever he is directed to do, must be done; and let the result be what it will, he is in no shape answerable. But place the same man at the head of an independent army, however trifling in point of number, the case becomes completely changed; since he feels that upon his determinations depend, not only the success, but the lives and safety of his troops. There are few persons so gifted by nature with the talents of a warrior, as not to experience, when first brought into this situation, a degree of anxiety which is sure to produce vacillation. But in war there is nothing more likely than this to occasion fatal effects; since it is better to persist in a plan, though not the best, than to distract the minds of your soldiers by continual changing. Of diffidence, General Ross was certainly guilty, and exhibited it in the loss, first of three hours at Nottingham, and again of eight hours at Marlborough. It may be said, indeed, that unless the capture of Washington was the original end of the inroad, he should not be

accused of diffidence by pausing before he undertook it. But to this I cannot agree; because a general ought to make up his mind in a moment; and surely, three hours afforded sufficient time for that purpose: and the truth is, that the capture of Washington was not the original end of the expedition. To destroy the flotilla, was the sole object of the disembarkation; and but for the instigations of Admiral Cockburn, who accompanied the army, the capital of America would probably have escaped its visitation. It was he, who, on the retreat of that flotilla from Nottingham, urged the necessity of a pursuit, which was not agreed to without some wavering; and it was he also who suggested the attack upon Washington, and finally prevailed on General Ross to venture so far from the shipping.

The next error which I am bound to notice, was displayed in the battle itself. The troops were hurried into action after a long and toilsome march, without having time to close their ranks, or to cool their parched lips with water. No attempt was made to discover a ford, by which they might cross the river, but they were led directly in the face of a powerful battery, to assault the very centre of the enemy's position. Had the Americans been better troops, and in a higher state of discipline, the consequences of this rash impetuosity must have been fatal; since our army

might have been attacked in detail, and each brigade cut off singly, before the others could arrive to its support.

I mention this as a glaring fault, because it appeared that there was a ford near to the left of the American position. Now, had part of the army made a demonstration at the bridge, whilst the rest crossed by this ford, the attention of the enemy would have been drawn to two points instead of one; and their left, which after all was turned before the battle was won, might have been broken at once, and the victory gained with half the loss. In attacking an enemy's position, the greater number of points which you threaten, the more likely will you be to succeed. If, for example, they behold columns moving upon their right, their left, aud centre at the same time, it is clear that they will be unable to change their present order, because they cannot tell upon what point the real assault is to fall; whereas, if you advance in one body, they see instantly where danger is to be apprehended, and weaken the rest of their line, that they may oppose it. Again, the precipitancy with which the troops were hurried into fire, prevented the possibility of maintaining close or firm ranks. The consequence was, that they could make no head against a charge, and had the Americans only followed them up, when they

fell back, the destruction of the light brigade would have been inevitable.

Against all this it may be urged, that nothing damps the courage of an enemy so much as your appearing to despise them; and that in war, more depends upon celerity of movement, than on the calculation of chances. The truth of both propositions I fully allow, but I cannot say that I perceive their weight on the present occasion. To have remained quiet all night, for the purpose of attacking at day-break next morning, would unquestionably have been improper; but to halt for a single hour, could have produced no fatal delay, would have refreshed the men, and given time for stragglers to come up, and might have been probably attended by the discovery of the ford. Yet, after all, it is absurd to argue against the disposition of a battle which has been gained. Success justifies the measures adopted for securing it; and whether those of General Ross were the most prudent or not, that they succeeded was beyond all question.

Having now stated what I thought his errors, I must be permitted, likewise, to state his excellencies. In the choice of ground for halting, in the order both of advancing and retreating, and in the rapidity of his motions as soon as his plan was arranged, he displayed the skill of an able leader. No man could possess more of a soldier's eye in examining

a country, than General Ross; and in what little manœuvring the circumstances permitted, he exhibited the proficiency of one well practised in the arts of campaigning. It will be recollected, that on the 23d, the day previous to the battle, we fell in with a strong body of the enemy, to deceive whom, we wheeled off from the main road, and took the direction of Alexandria. The bait took completely; for this party was in fact the advanced guard of the main army. Thinking that Alexandria, and not Washington, was threatened, the American general abandoned a strong position, which he had seized on the main road, harassed his troops by a needless march towards that town; and discovered his mistake, only time enough to occupy the heights of Bladensburg a very few minutes before we came in sight.

With respect to the Americans, criticism necessarily degenerates into unqualified censure. From the beginning to the end of the affair, they acted in no one instance like prudent or sagacious men. In the first place, they ought on no account to have risked a general action in an open country, however strong and steep; and secondly, they deserved to suffer much more than they did, for permitting an enemy's army to penetrate beyond Nottingham. In allowing us to land without opposition, they were perhaps guilty of no great error; but as soon as we had landed, instead of

concentrating their forces in one place, they ought to have harassed us with continual skirmishing; felled trees on each side, and thrown them across the road; dug deep ditches at certain intervals; in short, to have adopted the mode of warfare to which their own habits, as well as the nature of their country, invited them.

In America, every man is a shot from his very boyhood, and every man serves in the militia; but to bring an army of raw militia-men, however excellent they might be as shots, into a fair field against regular troops, could end in nothing but defeat. When two lines oppose each other, very little depends upon the accuracy with which individuals take aim. It is then that the habit of acting in concert, the confidence which each man feels in his companions, and the rapidity and good order in which different movements can be executed, are alone of real service. But put these raw militia-men into thick-woods, and send your regular troops to drive them out, you will immediately lose all the advantages of discipline, and reduce your battle to so many single combats.

Here, therefore, lay their great error; had they left all clear, and permitted us to advance as far as Nottingham, then broken up the roads, and covered them with trees, it would have been impossible for us to go a step beyond. As soon as this was effected, they might have skirmished with us

in front, and kept our attention alive with part of their troops, while the rest, acquainted as they doubtless were with every inch of the country, had got into our rear, and, by a similar mode of proceeding, cut off our retreat. Thus we should have been taken in a snare, from which we could not extricate ourselves, and should have been obliged, in all probability, to surrender at discretion.

But this obvious and natural plan of defence, they chose to reject, and determined to trust all to the fate of a battle. And here, again, they were guilty of a monstrous error, in not occupying the town of Bladensburg with part of their forces. The most open village, if resolutely defended, will cost many men before it falls; whereas Bladensburg, being composed of substantial brick houses, might have been maintained for hours against all our efforts. In the next place, they displayed great want of military knowledge in the disposition of both their infantry and artillery. There was not, in the whole space of their line, a single point where an enemy would be exposed to a cross fire. The troops were drawn up in three straight lines, like so many regiments upon a gala parade; while the guns were used as connecting links to a chain, being posted in the same order, by ones and twos, at every interval.

In maintaining themselves, likewise, when attacked, they exhibited neither skill nor resolution.

Of the personal courage of the Americans, there can be no doubt; they are, individually taken, as brave a nation as any in the world. But they are not soldiers; they have not the experience nor the habits of soldiers. It was the height of folly, therefore, to bring them into a situation where nothing except that experience and those habits will avail; and it is on this account that I repeat what I have already said, that the capture of Washington was more owing to the faults of the Americans themselves, than to any other cause.

LETTER XII.

WHILE the army was thus actively employed, the fleet did not remain idle. A squadron of frigates, with two bomb ships, under the command of Captain Gordon, of the Sea-horse, penetrated up the Potomac, and appeared before Alexandria. The whole of the militia of the district was at this time called away for the defence of the capital, consequently no place could be less prepared to resist an invader, than that city. A party accordingly landed from the ships without opposition, and having destroyed the barracks, public works, and all the cannon which they found on shore, they seized a number of schooners and other small craft, then lying in the harbour, and loading them with flour and tobacco, to a considerable amount, prepared to rejoin the fleet in the bay.

But by this time the country was alarmed; a detachment was sent from the main army, and being joined by the reserve of militia, it was determined to intercept the squadron on its return. With this view, several pieces of heavy cannon were mounted upon a steep part of the bank, where the river, in making an angle, narrows con-

siderably in its channel. Thither, also, hastened large bodies of infantry, and before the frigates had begun to weigh anchor, nearly 5,000 men were assembled to prevent their passage.

Of these preparations Captain Gordon did not long remain ignorant; nor was he backward in making the best arrangements possible to meet the danger. By shifting the ballast in each of the vessels entirely to one side, he caused them to lean in such a manner as that their artillery could be elevated to a surprizing degree, and the shot rise even to the summit of the hill. The guns were then stuffed, rather than loaded, with grape shot and musket-balls; and the ships, taking their stations according to their draft of water, the lightest keeping nearest to the enemy's shore, set sail, and, favoured by a leading breeze, stood leisurely down the river.

As soon as they arrived within tangible distance, a brisk cannonade was opened upon them from the heights, and the whole of the infantry appeared in line along the brow of the eminence. Regardless of these formidable salutations, the ships continued to hold their course without changing their order, or returning a shot, till they reached the base of the hill upon which the infantry stood, and received a volley of musketry into their decks. Then, indeed, they answered the fire; and, with such effect, that at the first

broadside the enemy's guns were abandoned, and their infantry took to flight. The Americans had persuaded themselves that no ship could point her guns so as to reach the top of the hill; and under this idea had drawn up their troops along the ridge with the intention of overawing the squadron by a display of their numbers. But in the event they found themselves mistaken, for so well had Captain Gordon arranged matters, that not a single shot fell under its mark; and the consequence was, that prepared as the ships were for the occasion, a shower of balls of every size and description came amongst them, such as it was impossible to withstand. A single broadside was sufficient to secure the safe passage of his squadron; but with this Captain Gordon was not contented. Seeing the enemy driven from their cannon, he immediately landed his marines, spiked the guns, and blew up the expense magazines; when, having received them all safely on board again, he continued his voyage, and regained the Chesapeake without farther molestation.

Nor was this the only operation in which the navy were employed. Cruising about in every direction, they threatened the whole line of coast, from the entrance to the very bend of the bay; and thus kept the Americans in a constant state of alarm. Whenever a favourable opportunity

presented itself, parties landed, plundered or destroyed the government stores, laid towns and districts under contribution, and brought off all the shipping which could be reached. In a word, the hostilities carried on in the Chesapeake resembled the expeditions of the ancient Danes against Great Britain, rather than a modern war between civilized nations. But these hasty excursions, though generally successful, were not always performed without loss to the invaders. Many men and some officers were killed and wounded, among whom was Captain Sir Peter Parker, of the Menelaus frigate, an officer distinguished for his gallantry and knowledge of naval tactics. Having learnt that an encampment of 300 men and six pieces of cannon had been formed, at the distance of a few miles from the banks of the Potomac, and about nine leagues below Alexandria, he determined, with part of his ship's crew, to surprise it, and to capture the guns. Running his frigate with this view up the river, he cast anchor opposite to the place where the American forces lay; and leaving on board only a sufficient number of sailors to manage the ship, and to guard against surprise, with the rest, amounting to 200 seamen and marines, he landed, and marched rapidly towards the enemy's camp. But intelligence of his proceedings had already reached them; patroles of horse hovering continually along the coast for

the purpose of watching the motions of our fleet. When, therefore, he arrived at the point of destination, he found the bivouack deserted, and the rear-guard in full retreat. With these a little skirmishing ensued, and he received a rifle ball in the thigh. Not suspecting that the wound was dangerous, he continued to push forward, till he fell exhausted from loss of blood; when, on examining the hurt, it was found that the femoral artery was cut: and before any proper assistance could be afforded, he literally bled to death. Seeing their leader killed, and the enemy retiring, apparently with the design of drawing them away from the coast, the sailors now halted; and taking up their dead commander, returned to the river without having been able to effect any thing which might, in any degree, console them for their loss.

In the mean time, the army continued, for some days, quietly on board the ships in the Patuxent. The wounded, whose cases appeared most desperate, were removed to vessels fitted up for their reception, and sailed, some for Halifax, and others for England. The dispatches were likewise made out, and sent off in the Iphigenia, whilst a sort of breathing time was given to those who had been lately so actively employed. While this sabbath continued, I amused myself by landing; and, under the pretext of shooting, strolled, sometimes

farther up the country than prudence exactly warranted. The houses and villas, upon the immediate banks of the river, I found universally deserted, and thoroughly plundered. The corn, however, was uninjured, and even flocks of sheep were seen grazing within a short distance of the water, protected only by negro slaves. Of these none were taken without an equivalent being as faithfully paid, as if they had been sold in the market-place of New York; a circumstance which favoured the belief that the houses had been ransacked, not by the British troops, but by the inhabitants themselves. Whether it was really so or not I cannot say: but this I know, that from the time of our arrival in the Chesapeake, all acts of individual plunder or violence were strictly prohibited, and severely punished.

But this appearance of ruin and desertion extended not more than a mile or two from the coast. Beyond that, I found the cottages occupied by their owners, and every thing remaining as if no enemy were within a hundred miles. The young men, indeed, were generally absent; because every man fit to bear arms was now serving with the army; but the old men and the women seemed to live as comfortably as if the most profound peace had reigned throughout the State. Nor did I find them altogether so hostile to our interest as I had expected. They professed to be Federalists; and

though they regretted the events of the war, they blamed their own rulers for its commencement. Tempted by this show of quietness, I one day continued my walk to a greater distance from the fleet than I had yet ventured to do. My servant was with me, but had no arms, and I was armed only with a double-barrelled fowling piece. Having wearied myself with looking for game, and penetrated beyond my former land-mark, I came suddenly upon a small hamlet, occupying a piece of cleared ground in the very heart of a thick wood. With this, to confess the truth, I was by no means delighted, more especially as I perceived two stout looking men sitting at the door of one of the cottages. To retire, unobserved, was, however, impossible, because the rustling which I had made among the trees, drew their attention, and they saw me, probably, before I had seen them. Perceiving that their eyes were fixed upon me, I determined to put a bold face upon the matter; and calling aloud, as if to a party to halt, I advanced, with my servant, towards them. They were dressed in sailors' jackets and trowsers, and rose on my approach, taking off their hats with much civility. On joining them, I demanded whether they were not Englishmen, and deserters from the fleet, stating that I was in search of two persons very much answering their description. They assured me that they were Americans, and

no deserters, begging that I would not take them away; a request to which, after some time, I assented. They then conducted me into the house, where I found an old man, and three women, who entertained me with bread, cheese, and new milk. While I was sitting here, a third youth, in the dress of a labourer, entered, and whispered to one of the sailors, who immediately rose to go out, but I commanded him to sit still, declaring that I was not satisfied, and should certainly arrest him if he attempted to escape. The man sat down sulkily; and the young labourer coming forward, begged permission to examine my gun. This was a request which I did not much relish, and with which I, of course, refused to comply; telling the fellow that it was loaded, and that I was unwilling to trust it out of my own hand, on account of a weakness in one of the locks.

I had now kept up appearances as long as they could be kept up, and, therefore, rose to withdraw; a measure to which I was additionally induced by the appearance of two other countrymen at the opposite end of the hamlet. I, therefore, told the sailors that if they would pledge themselves to remain quietly at home, without joining the American army, I would not molest them; warning them, at the same time, not to venture beyond the village, lest they should fall into the hands of other parties, who were also in search of deserters. The

promise they gave, but not with much alacrity, when I rose, and keeping my eye fixed upon them, and my gun ready cocked in my hand, walked out, followed by my servant. They conducted us to the door, and stood staring after us till we got to the edge of the wood; when I observed them moving towards their countrymen, who also gazed upon us, without either advancing or flying. You will readily believe, that as soon as we found ourselves concealed by the trees, we lost no time in endeavouring to discover the direct way towards the shipping; but plunging into the thickets, ran with all speed, without thinking of aught except an immediate escape from pursuit. Whether the Americans did attempt to follow, or not, I cannot tell. If they did, they took a wrong direction, for in something more than an hour I found myself at the edge of the river, a little way above the shipping, and returned safely on board, fully resolved not again to expose myself to such risks, without necessity.

In this manner the time was spent, till day-break on the 6th of September; when the whole fleet got under way, and stood towards the Chesapeake. The wind was fair, and we speedily cleared the river; but instead of standing up the bay as we had expected, we ran down a few miles below the mouth of the Patuxent, and there anchored. A

signal was then made by telegraph, for all ships to send in a return of the number of seamen whom, in addition to marines, they could land with small arms. Every ship's crew was accordingly mustered, and it was found that, besides the numbers necessary for conveying stores, and dragging guns, one thousand sailors could be spared from the fleet. Thus, in spite of our loss at Bladensburg, we were enabled, on our next debarkation, to bring into the field about five thousand fighting men.

Next morning we again weighed, and directed our course towards the Potomac. We entered this river soon after mid-day, and continued to stem the stream during the night, and till dusk on the following day; when we again brought up. Here we were joined by Admiral Cockburn, who had quitted the anchorage some days before the rest of the fleet, with a large flotilla of prizes and small craft; and having, on the 9th, once more set sail, and steered for a few hours in the direction of Alexandria, we suddenly put about, and, favoured by a fresh breeze, ran down to the bay, turning our heads upwards towards the Patapsco. Baltimore, it was now understood, was the point of attack, and towards the river, upon which that town is built, we hastened under a heavy press of sail.

The object of this manœuvering was evidently to deceive the enemy, and by keeping him in sus-

pense as to the place threatened, to prevent his concentrating his forces, or throwing up works for its defence. But in the attainment of our object, the event proved that we were but partially successful. Certain it is, however, that the utmost consternation prevailed in every town or village opposite to which we made our appearance. In passing Annapolis, a considerable town built upon the bay, and possessing a tolerable harbour, we stood in so close as to discern the inhabitants flying from their houses; carts and wagons loaded with furniture, hurrying along the roads, and horsemen galloping along the shore, as if watching the fearful moment when the boats should be hoisted out, and the troops quit the vessels. Wherever a light-house or signal station was erected, alarm-guns were fired, and beacons lighted. In a word, all the horrors of doubt and apprehension seemed to oppress the inhabitants of this devoted district.

The fair wind continuing to blow without interruption, on the 11th we came in sight of the projecting head-land, where it was designed to disembark the troops. This was a promontory washed by the Patapsco on one side, and a curvature of the bay itself on the other. It was determined to land here, rather than to ascend the river, because the Patapsco, though broad, is far from deep. It is, in fact, too shallow to admit a line of battle

ship; and, as no one could guess what impediments might be thrown in the way to obstruct the navigation, prudence forbad that five thousand men should be entrusted to the convoy of the smaller vessels alone. Besides, the distance from this point to Baltimore did not exceed fourteen or fifteen miles; a space which might easily be traversed in a day.

But while the land forces moved in this direction upon Baltimore, it was resolved that the frigates and bomb-ships should endeavour to force their way through every obstacle, and to obtain possession of the navigation of the river, so as, if possible, to co-operate with the army, by bombarding the place from the water. A frigate was accordingly dispatched to try the depth, and to take sounding of the channel, while the remainder of the fleet came to an anchor off the point. In the mean time all was again bustle and preparation on board the troop-ships and transports. Three days provisions were cooked, as before, and given to the men; and as we were now to carry every thing by a *coup-de-main*, twenty rounds of ammunition were added to the sixty with which soldiers are usually loaded; and a smaller quantity of other baggage was directed to be taken on shore. A blanket, with a spare shirt and pair of shoes, was considered enough for each man on an expedition

of so rapid a nature; whilst brushes and other articles of that description were divided between comrades, one carrying what would suffice for both. Thus the additional load of twenty cartridges was more than counter-balanced by the clothing and necessaries left behind.

It was dusk when we reached the anchorage, consequently no landing could take place before the morrow. But as the boats were ordered to be in readiness at dawn, every man slept in his clothes, that he might be prepared to start at a moment's warning. There was something in this state of preparation at once solemn and exciting. That we should obtain possession of a place so important as Baltimore, without fighting, was not to be expected; and, therefore, this arming, and this bustle seemed, in fact, to be the prelude to a battle. But no man, of the smallest reflection, can look forward to the chance of a sudden and violent death, without experiencing sensations very different from those which he experiences under any other circumstances. When the battle has fairly begun, I may say with truth that the feelings of those engaged are delightful; because they are, in fact, so many gamblers playing for the highest stake that can be offered. But the stir and noise of equipping, and then the calmness and stillness of expectation, these are the things which force a

man to think. On the other hand, the warlike appearance of every thing about you, the careless faces and rude jokes of the private soldiers, and something within yourself, which I can compare to nothing more nearly than the mirth which criminals are said sometimes to experience and to express previous to their execution; all these combine to give you a degree of false hilarity, I had almost said painful, from its very excess. It is an agitation of the nerves, such as we may suppose madmen feel; which you are inclined to wish removed, though you are unwilling to admit that it is disagreeable.

And yet, as if in mockery of these deadly preparations, I do not recollect to have seen a more heavenly night than the present. The heat of the day was past, a full clear moon shone brightly, in a sky where not a cloud could be discerned, and a heavy dew falling appeared to refresh the earth which had been parched and burnt up by the sun. We lay at this time within two miles of the shore, consequently every object there was distinctly visible. Around us were moored numerous ships, which, breaking the tide as it flowed gently onwards, produced a ceaseless murmur, like the gushing of a mountain stream. The voices of the sentinels, too, as they relieved one another on the decks; and the occasional splash of oars, as a soli-

tary boat rowed backwards and forwards to the admiral's ship for orders, sounded peculiarly musical in the perfect stillness of a calm night. Though I am far from giving the preference, in all respects, to a sailor's life, it must, nevertheless, be confessed that it has in it many moments of exquisite delight; and the present seemed to me to be of the number.

LETTER XIII.

But the stillness of night soon passed away, and at three o'clock in the morning every ship in the fleet began to lower her boats, and the soldiers were roused from their slumbers. The same precautions which had been formerly used to cover the landing, were again adopted; several gun-brigs laying themselves within cable's length of the beach, and the leading boats in every division being armed with carronades, loaded and ready for action. But, as had been the case at St. Benedict's, they were unnecessary; for the troops got on shore without opposition, and leisurely formed in an open field close to the river.

It was seven o'clock before the whole army was disembarked, and in order for marching. The same arrangements which had been made on the late expedition, were, as far as circumstances would permit, again adopted on this. The light brigade, now commanded by Major Jones, of the 41st Regiment, led the advance; then followed the artillery, amounting to six field pieces, and two howitzers, all of them drawn by horses; next came the se-

cond brigade, then the sailors, and last of all the third brigade. Flank patroles, and reconnoitring parties were likewise sent out; in short, the same admirable dispositions regulated the present march, which had governed our march to Washington.

The column being put in motion, advanced, without the occurrence of any incident deserving of notice, for about an hour, when it arrived at a piece of ground which appeared as if it had been lately in possession of the enemy. It was a narrow neck of land, confined between the river on one side, and the head of a creek on the other, measuring, perhaps, a mile across. From the river to the creek a breast-work had been begun, and was partly completed. In front of it there were lines drawn apparently for the purpose of marking out the width of a ditch; in some places the ditch itself was dug, and the commencement of what resembled an enfilading battery in the centre, showed that a considerable degree of science had been displayed in the choice of this spot as a military position. And, in truth, it was altogether such a position as, if completed, might have been maintained by a determined force against very superior numbers. Both flanks were completely protected, not only by water, but by thick wood, while a gentle eminence in the very middle of the line, offered the most desirable situation for the projecting battery which had been begun; because

a fire from it would have swept the whole, both to the right and left. In its present state, however, it was not tenable, unless by a force as able to attack as to defend; consequently the Americans, who acted solely on the defensive, did wisely in choosing another.

But the aspect of the ground was such as led us to conclude that the enemy could not be very distant. The troops were accordingly halted, that the rear might be well up, and the men fresh and ready for action. While this was done, part of the flank patrole came in, bringing with them three light-horsemen as prisoners. These were young gentlemen belonging to a corps of volunteers furnished by the town of Baltimore, who had been sent out to watch our motions, and convey intelligence to the American general. Being but little used to such service, they had suffered themselves to be surprised; and, instead of reporting to their own leader as to the number and dispositions of their adversaries, they were now catechized by General Ross respecting the strength and preparations of their friends. From them we learned that a force of no less than twenty thousand men was embodied for the defence of Baltimore; but as the accounts of prisoners are generally over-rated, we took it for granted that they made this report only to intimidate.

Having rested for the space of an hour, we

again moved forward, but had not proceeded above a mile, when a sharp fire of musketry was heard in front, and shortly afterwards a mounted officer came galloping to the rear, who desired us to quicken our pace, for that the advanced guard was engaged. At this intelligence, the ranks were closed, and the troops advanced at a brisk rate, and in profound silence. The firing still continued, though, from its running and irregular sound, it promised little else than a skirmish; but whether it was kept up by detatched parties alone, or by the out-posts of a regular army, we could not tell; because, from the quantity of wood with which this country abounds, and the total absence of all hills or eminences, it was impossible to discern what was going on at the distance of half a mile from where we stood.

We were now drawing near the scene of action, when another officer came at full speed towards us, with horror and dismay in his countenance, and calling aloud for a surgeon. Every man felt within himself that all was not right, though none was willing to believe the whispers of his own terror. But what at first we would not guess at, because we dreaded it so much, was soon realized; for the aid-de-camp had scarcely passed, when the general's horse, without its rider, and with the saddle and housings stained with blood, came plunging onwards. Nor was much

time given for fearful surmise, as to the extent of our misfortune. In a few moments we reached the ground where the skirmishing had taken place, and beheld poor Ross laid, by the side of the road, under a canopy of blankets, and apparently in the agonies of death. As soon as the firing began, he had ridden to the front, that he might ascertain from whence it originated, and, mingling with the skirmishers, was shot in the side by a rifleman. The wound was mortal: he fell into the arms of his aid-de-camp, and lived only long enough to name his wife, and to commend his family to the protection of his country. He was removed towards the fleet, but expired before his bearers could reach the boats.

It is impossible to conceive the effect which this melancholy spectacle produced throughout the army. By the courteousness and condescension of his manners, General Ross had secured the absolute love of all who served under him, from the highest to the lowest; and his success on a former occasion, as well as his judicious arrangements on the present, had inspired every one with the most perfect confidence in his abilities. His very error, if error it may be called, in so young a leader—I mean that diffidence in himself which had occasioned some loss of time on the march to Washington, appeared now to have left him. His movements were at once rapid and cautious; nay,

his very countenance indicated a fixed determination, and a perfect security of success. All eyes were turned upon him as we passed, and a sort of involuntary groan ran from rank to rank, from the front to the rear of the column.

By the fall of our gallant leader the command now devolved upon Colonel Brook, of the 44th Regiment, an officer of decided personal courage, but, perhaps, better calculated to lead a battalion, than to guide an army. Being informed of his unexpected and undesired elevation, he came to the front, and under him we continued to move on; sorrowful, indeed, but not dejected. The skirmishing had now ceased, for the American riflemen were driven in; and in a few minutes we found ourselves opposite to a considerable force, drawn up with some skill, and occupying a strong position. Judging from appearances, I should say that the corps now opposed to us amounted to six or seven thousand men. They covered a neck of land, very much resembling that which we had passed; having both flanks defended by little inland lakes; the whole of their position was well wooded, and in front of their line was a range of high palings, similar to those which intersected the field of Bladensburg. About the centre, though some way advanced, was a farm-house, with its out-buildings and stack-yard; and, near to the right, ran the main road. Their artillery, which

could not greatly exceed our own, either in weight of metal, or number of guns, was scattered along the line of infantry in nearly the same order as it had been at Bladensburg, and their reserve was partly seen, and partly hid by a thick wood.

The whole of this country is flat and unbroken. About half a mile in rear of where they stood, are some heights, but to occupy these as they should be occupied, would have required a much greater number of men than the American army could muster. Their general, therefore, exhibited some judgment in his choice of ground, but, perhaps, he would have exhibited more, had he declined a pitched battle altogether. Yet, to do him justice, I repeat that the ground was well chosen; for, besides the covering of wood which he secured for his own people, he took care to leave open fields in his front; by which means we were of necessity exposed to a galling fire, as soon as we came within range. Of one error, however, he was guilty. Either he did not possess himself of the farm-house at all, or he suffered it to be taken from him with very little resistance; for, on the arrival of the column at the ground where it was to form, it was in the occupation of our advanced guards. He was likewise to blame in not filling the wood upon our left with skirmishers. In short, he acted foolishly in merely attempting to repel attacks, without ever dreaming that the most effectual

mode of so doing, is to turn the tables, and attack the assailants.

As our troops came up, they filed off to the right and left, and drew up, just within cannon shot, in the following order. The light brigade, consisting, as I have formerly stated, of the 85th Regiment, and the light companies of the other corps, in extended order, threatened the whole front of the American army. The 21st remained in column upon the road; the 4th moved off to the right, and advanced through a thicket to turn the enemy's left; and the 44th, the seamen and marines, formed line in rear of the light brigade.

While this formation was going on, the artillery being brought up, opened upon the American army, and a smart cannonade ensued on both sides. That our guns were well served, I myself can bear witness; for I saw the Shrapnel shells which were thrown from them strike among the enemy, and make fearful gaps in the line. Our rockets likewise began to play, one of which, falling short, lighted upon a hay-stack in the barn-yard belonging to the farm-house, and immediately set it on fire. The house itself, the stables, barns, and out-houses, as well as all the other stacks, soon caught the flames, and were quickly in a state of conflagration; and the smoke and blaze which they emitted, together with the roar

of cannon and flashes of the guns, produced altogether a very fine effect.

In the mean time the American artillery was not idle. Pushing forward two light field-pieces upon the road, they opened a destructive fire of grape upon the 21st Regiment, and such of the sailors as occupied that point. Three other guns were directed against our artillery, between which and several of our pieces, a sort of duel was maintained; and the rest played, without ceasing, upon the 85th, and the light companies, who had lain down while the other regiments took up their ground. Neither was their infantry altogether quiet. They marched several strong bodies from the right to the left, and withdrew others from the left to the right of their line, though for what end this marching and countermarching was undertaken, I am at a loss to conceive. While thus fluctuating, it was curious to observe their dread of every spot where a cannon-ball had struck. Having seen the shots fall, I kept my eye upon one or two places, and perceived that each company, as it drew near to those points, hung back; and then assuming, as it were, a momentary courage, rushed past, leaving a vacancy between it and the company which next succeeded.

All this while the whole of our infantry, except the 4th Regiment, lay or stood in anxious expec-

tation of an order to advance. This, however, was not given till that regiment had reached the thicket through which it was to make its way; when Colonel Brook, with his Staff, having galloped along the line to see that all was ready, commanded the signal to be made. The charge was accordingly sounded, and echoed back from every bugle in the army, when, starting from the ground where they had lain, the troops moved on in a cool and orderly manner. A dreadful discharge of grape and canister shot, of old locks, pieces of broken muskets, and every thing which they could cram into their guns, was now sent forth from the whole of the enemy's artillery; and some loss was on our side experienced. Regardless of this, our men went on without either quickening or retarding their pace, till they came within an hundred yards of the American line. As yet not a musket had been fired, or a word spoken on either side, but the enemy, now raising a shout, fired a volley from right to left, and then kept up a rapid and ceaseless discharge of musketry. Nor were our people backward in replying to these salutes; for giving them back both their shout and their volley, we pushed on at double quick, with the intention of bringing them to the charge.

The bayonet is a weapon peculiarly British; at least it is a weapon, which, in the hands of a British soldier, is irresistible. Though they main-

tained themselves with great determination, and stood to receive our fire till scarcely twenty yards divided us, the Americans would not hazard a charge. On our left, indeed, where the 21st advanced in column, it was not without much difficulty and a severe loss, that any attempt to charge could be made; for in that quarter seemed to be the flower of the enemy's infantry, as well as the main body of their artillery; towards the right, however, the day was quickly won. The only thing to be regretted, indeed, was that the attack had not been for some time longer deferred; because the Americans were broken and fled, just as the 4th Regiment began to show itself upon the brink of the water which covered their flank; and before a shallow part could be discovered, and the troops were enabled to pass, they had time to escape.

As soon as their left gave way, the whole American army fell into confusion; nor do I recollect on any occasion to have witnessed a more complete rout. Infantry, cavalry, and artillery, were huddled together, without the smallest regard to order or regularity. The sole subject of anxiety seemed to be which should escape first from the field of battle; insomuch, that numbers were actually trodden down by their countrymen in the hurry of the flight. Yet, in spite of the short duration of the action, which lasted little more than two

hours from its first commencement, the enemy's loss was severe. They stood, in some respects, better than they had done at Bladensburg, consequently we were more mingled with them when they gave way, and were thus enabled to secure some prisoners; an event, which their more immediate flight had on the other occasion prevented. In the capture of guns, however, we were not so fortunate. Their pieces being light, and well supplied with horses, they contrived to carry off all except two; both of which would have also escaped, but for the shooting of the leaders.

But, considering the nature of the ground which they occupied, the number of killed and wounded in the American army was enormous; while in ours the casualties were much fewer than might have been expected. The 21st and seamen suffered most severely, and the 85th and light companies, a little; but had our gallant General been spared, we should have pronounced this a glorious, because a comparatively bloodless day. In the loss of that one man, however, we felt ourselves more deeply wounded, than if the best battalion in the army had been sacrificed.

In following up the flying enemy, the same obstacles which presented themselves at Bladensburg, again came in the way. The thick woods quickly screened the fugitives; and as even our mounted drivers were wanting, their horses having been

taken for the use of the artillery, no effectual pursuit could be attempted. We accordingly halted upon the field of battle, of necessity content with the success which we had obtained; and having collected the stragglers, and called in the pursuers, it was resolved to pass the night in this situation. Fires were therefore lighted, and the troops distributed in such manner, as to secure a tolerable position in case of attack; and the wounded being removed into two or three houses scattered along the ground, the victors lay down to sleep under the canopy of heaven.

Having thus given a distinct and connected detail of this affair, I shall beg leave to finish my letter with one or two anecdotes, which may be not unamusing. It is said that when Admiral Cockburn, who accompanied the army, and attended poor Ross with the fidelity of an aid-de-camp, was in the wood where the latter fell, he observed an American rifle-man taking deliberate aim at him from behind a tree. Instead of turning aside, or discharging a pistol at the fellow, as any other man would have done, the brave Admiral doubling his fist, shook it at his enemy, and cried aloud, "O you d—d Yankey, I'll give it you!" upon which the man dropped his musket in the greatest alarm, and took to his heels.

It is likewise told of an officer of engineers, that having overtaken an American soldier, and de-

manded his arms, the fellow gave him his rifle very readily, but being ordered to resign a handsome silver-hilted dagger and silver-mounted cartouch-box, which graced his side, he refused to comply, alleging that they were private property, and that by our own proclamations private property should be respected. This was an instance of low cunning, which reminded my of my own adventure with the squirrel-hunters, and which was attended with equal success.

One other anecdote of a different nature, and for the truth of which I can myself answer, may likewise be related. In strolling over the field of battle, I came unexpectedly upon a wounded American, who lay among some bushes with his leg broken. I drew near to offer him assistance, but on seeing me, the wretch screamed out, and appeared in the greatest alarm; nor was it without some difficulty that I could persuade him he had nothing to fear. At last, being convinced that I intended him no harm, the fellow informed me that it was impressed upon the minds of their soldiers by the officers, that from the British they might expect no quarter; and that it was consequently their determination to give no quarter to the British. The fellow might belie his countrymen, and I hope and believe he did, but such was his report to me. To convince him of the falsity

of his notions, I removed him to one of our hospitals, where his leg was amputated; and he saw himself, as well as many others of his wounded countrymen, treated with the same attention which was bestowed upon our own soldiers.

LETTER XIV.

At an early hour on the 13th, the troops were roused from their lairs, and, forming upon the ground, waited till day-light should appear. A heavy rain had come on about midnight, and now fell with so much violence, that some precautions were necessary, in order to prevent the firelocks from being rendered useless by wet. Such of the men as were fortunate enough to possess leathern cases, wrapped them round the locks of their muskets, while the rest held them in the best manner they could, under their elbows; no man thinking of himself, but only how he could best keep his arms in a serviceable condition.

As soon as the first glimmering of dawn could be discerned, we moved to the road, and took up our wonted order of march; but before we pushed forward, the troops were desired to lighten themselves still farther by throwing off their blankets, which were to be left under a slender guard till their return. This was accordingly done; and being now unincumbered, except by a knapsack almost empty, every man felt his spirits heightened in proportion to the diminution of his load. The

grief of soldiers is seldom of long duration; and though I will not exactly say that poor Ross was already forgotten, the success of yesterday had reconciled at least the privates to the guidance of their new leader; nor was any other issue anticipated, than what would have attended the excursion, had he still been its main-spring and director.

The country through which we passed, resembled in every particular that already described. Wood and cultivation succeeded each other at intervals, though the former surpassed the latter in tenfold extent; but instead of deserted villages and empty houses which had met us on the way to Washington, we found most of the inhabitants remaining peaceably in their homes, and relying upon the assurance of protection given to them in our proclamations. Nor had they cause to repent of that confidence. In no instance were they insulted, plundered, or ill-treated; whereas every house which was abandoned, fell a prey to the scouts and reconnoitring parties.

But our march to-day was not so rapid as our motions generally were. The Americans had at last adopted an expedient which, if carried to its proper length, might have entirely stopped our progress. In most of the woods they had felled trees, and thrown them across the road, but as these abattis were without defenders, we experienced no other inconvenience than what arose

from loss of time; being obliged to halt on all such occasions, till the pioneers had removed the obstacle. So great, however, was even this hindrance, that we did not come in sight of the main army of the Americans till evening, although the distance travelled could not exceed ten miles.

It now appeared, that the corps which we had beaten yesterday, was only a detachment, and not a large one, from the force collected for the defence of Baltimore; and that the account given by the volunteer troopers, was in every respect correct. Upon a ridge of hills, which concealed the town itself from observation, stood the grand army, consisting of twenty thousand men. Not trusting to his superiority in numbers, their general had there entrenched them in the most formidable manner, having covered the whole face of the heights with breast-works, thrown back his left, so as to rest it upon a strong fort, erected for the protection of the river, and constructed a chain of field redoubts, which covered his right, and commanded the entire ascent. Along the side of the hill were likewise *fleches*, and other projecting works, from which a cross fire might be kept up; and there were mounted throughout this commanding position no less than one hundred pieces of cannon.

It would be absurd to suppose that the sight of preparations so warlike, did not in some degree

damp the ardour of our leaders ; at least it would have been madness to storm such works, without pausing to consider how it might best be attempted. The whole of the country within cannon-shot was cleared from wood, and laid out in grass and corn fields ; consequently there was no cover to shelter an attacking army from any part of the deadly fire which would be immediately poured upon it. The most prudent plan, therefore, was to wait till dark ; and then, assisted by the frigates and bombs, which we hoped were by this time ready to co-operate, to try the fortune of a battle.

Having resolved thus to act, Colonel Brook halted his army ; and having secured it against surprise by a well-connected line of piquets, the troops were permitted to light fires, and to cook the provisions. But though the rain still fell in torrents, no shelter could be obtained : and as even their blankets were no longer at hand, with which to form gipsy-tents, this was the reverse of an agreeable bivouac to the whole army.

Darkness had now come on, and as yet no intelligence had arrived from the shipping. To assail this position, however, without the aid of the fleet, was deemed impracticable ; at least our chance of success would be greatly diminished, without their co-operation. As the left of the American army extended to a fort, built upon the very brink of

the river, it was clear, that, could the ships be brought to bear upon that point, and the fort be silenced by their fire, that flank of the position would be turned. This once effected, there would be no difficulty in pushing a column within their works ; and as soldiers entrenched always place more reliance upon the strength of their entrenchments than upon their own personal exertions, the very sight of our people on a level with them, would in all probability decide the contest. At all events, as this column was to advance under cover of night, it might easily push forward and crown the hill above the enemy, before any effectual opposition could be offered ; by which means they would be inclosed between two fires, and lose the advantage which their present elevated situation bestowed. All, however, depended upon the ability of the fleet to lend their assistance, for without silencing the fort, this flank could scarcely be assailed with any chance of success ; and, therefore, the whole plan of operations must be changed.

Having waited till it was considered imprudent to wait longer, without knowing whether he was to be supported, Colonel Brook determined, if possible, to open a communication with the fleet. That the river could not be far off, we knew ; but how to get to it without falling in with wandering parties of the enemy, was the difficulty. The

thing, however, must be done; and as secrecy, and not force, was the main object, it was resolved to dispatch for the purpose a single officer without an escort. On this service, a particular friend of mine chanced to be employed. Mounting his horse, he proceeded to the right of the army, where, having delayed a few minutes till the moon rising gave light enough through the clouds to distinguish objects, he pushed forward at a venture, in as straight a line as he could guess at. It was not long before his progress was stopped by a high hedge. Like knight-errants of old, he then gave himself up to the guidance of his horse, which taking him towards the rear, soon brought him into a narrow lane, that appeared to wind in the direction of the enemy's fort: this lane he determined to follow, and holding a cocked pistol in his hand, pushed on, not perhaps entirely comfortable, but desirous at all hazards of executing his commission. He had not ridden far, when the sound of voices through the splashing of the rain drew his attention. Pulling up, he listened in silence, and soon discovered that they came from two American soldiers, whether stragglers or sentinels, it was impossible to divine; but whoever they were, they seemed to be approaching. It now struck him, that his safest course would be to commence the attack, and having therefore waited till he saw them stop short, as if they had perceived

him, he rode forward, and called out to them to surrender. The fellows turned and fled, but galloping after them, he overtook one, at whose head he presented a pistol, and who instantly threw down his rifle, and yielded himself prisoner; while the other, dashing into a thicket, escaped, probably to tell that he had been attacked by a whole regiment of British cavalry. Having thus taken a prisoner, my friend resolved to make him of some use; with this view, he commanded him to lay hold of his thigh, and to guide him directly to the river, threatening, if he attempted to mislead or to betray him into the hands of the Americans, that he would instantly blow out his brains. Finding himself completely in my friend's power, the fellow could not refuse to obey; and accordingly, the man resting his hand upon the left thigh of the officer, they proceeded along the lane for some time, till they came to a part where it branched off in two directions. My friend here stopped for a moment, and again repeated his threat, swearing that the instant he suspected his guiding, should be the last of his life. The soldier assured him that he would keep his word, and moreover informed him that some of our ships were almost within gunshot of the fort; a piece of information which was quickly confirmed by the sound of firing, and the appearance of shells in the air. They now struck to the right, and in half an hour gained the brink

of the river; where my friend found a party just landed from the squadron, and preparing to seek their way towards the camp. By them he was conducted to the Admiral, from whom he learnt that no effectual support could be given to the land force: for such was the shallowness of the river, that none except the very lightest craft could make their way within six miles of the town; and even these were stopped by vessels sunk in the channel, and other artificial bars, barely within a shell's longest range of the fort. With this unwelcome news he was accordingly forced to return; and taking his unwilling guide along with him, he made his way, without any adventure, to our advanced posts; where, having thanked the fellow for his fidelity, he rewarded it more effectually, by setting him at liberty.

Having brought his report to head-quarters, a council of war was instantly summoned to deliberate upon what was best to be done. Without the help of the fleet, it was evident, that adopt what plan of attack we could, our loss must be such as to counterbalance even success itself; while success, under existing circumstances, was, to say the least of it, doubtful. And even if we should succeed, what would be gained by it? We could not remove any thing from Baltimore, for want of proper conveyances. Had the ships been able to reach the town, then, indeed, the quantity

of booty might have repaid the survivors for their toil, and consoled them for the loss of comrades; but as the case now stood, we should only fight to give us an opportunity of reacting the scenes of Washington. To distress an enemy is, no doubt, desirable, but, in the present instance, that distress, even if brought upon the Americans, would cost us dear; whereas, if we failed, it was hardly possible to avoid destruction.

Such was the reasoning which influenced the council of war to decide that all idea of storming the enemy's lines should be given up. To draw them from their works would require manœuvring, and manœuvring requires time; but delays were all in their favour, and could not possibly advantage us. Every hour brought in reinforcements to their army, whereas ours had no source from which even to recruit its losses; and it was, therefore, deemed prudent, since we could not fight at once, to lose no time in returning to the shipping.

About three hours after midnight, the troops were accordingly formed upon the road, and began their retreat; leaving the piquets to deceive the enemy, and to follow as a rear guard. The rain, which had continued with little interruption since the night before, now ceased, and the moon shone out bright and clear. We marched along, therefore, not in the same spirits as if we had been

advancing, but feeling no abasement at having thus relinquished an enterprize so much beyond our strength.

When the day broke, our piquets which had withdrawn about an hour before, rejoined us, and we went on in a body. Marching over the field where the battle of the 12th had been fought, we beheld the dead scattered about, and still unburied; but so far different from those which we had seen at Bladensburg, that they were not stripped, every man lying as he had fallen. One object, however, struck me as curious. I saw several men hanging lifeless among the branches of trees, and learnt that they had been riflemen, who chose, during the battle, to fix themselves in these elevated situations, for the combined purposes of securing a good aim, and avoiding danger. Whatever might be their success in the first of these designs, in the last they failed; for our men soon discovered them, and, considering the thing as *unfair*, refused to give them quarter, and shot them on their perches.

Here we paused for about an hour, that the soldiers might collect their blankets, and refresh themselves; when we again moved forward, passing the wood where the gallant Ross was killed. It was noon, and as yet all had gone on smoothly without any check or alarm. So little indeed was pursuit dreamt of, that the column began to

straggle, and to march without much regard to order; when suddenly the bugle sounded from the rear, and immediately after some musket shots were heard. In an instant the men were in their places, and the regiments wheeled into line facing towards the enemy. The artillery turned round and advanced to the front, nor did I ever see a manœuvre more coolly or more steadily performed on a parade in England, than this rally. The alarm, however, turned out to be groundless, being occasioned only by the sudden appearance of a squadron of horse which had been sent out by the American general to track our steps. These endeavoured to charge the rear-guard, and succeeded in making two prisoners; but a single Shrapnel checked their further advance, and sent them back at full speed to boast of the brave exploit which they had performed.

Seeing that no attack was seriously intended, the army broke once more into the line of march, and proceeded to a favourable piece of ground, near the uncompleted position which I have already described; where we passed the night under little tents made with blankets and ram-rods. No alarm occurring, nor any cause of delay appearing, at day-break we again got under arms, and pushed on towards the shipping, which, in two hours, were distinguishable.

The infantry now halted upon a narrow neck of

land, while the artillery was lifted into boats, and conveyed on board the fleet. As soon as this was done, brigade after brigade fell back to the water's edge, and embarked, till finally all, except the light troops, were got off. These being left to cover the embarkation, were extended across the entire space which but a little before contained the whole army; but as no attempt was made to molest them, they had only the honour of being the last to quit the shore.

Having ventured to give my opinion on the skill and military knowledge displayed on both sides, during the late expedition, it may, perhaps, be expected that I should do the same on the present occasion. The fact is, however, that there is here but little room for criticism; and that little would be almost a recapitulation of what has been already said. On the part of the British general I am not aware of a single error that can be noticed. Poor Ross, indeed, threw himself away, by exposing his person unnecessarily in a trifling skirmish; but who will blame a soldier for excess of courage, or a leader for excess of alertness? Like other able men, he was unwilling to trust to the report of his subalterns, when it was in his power to ascertain what he sought to know by personal observation; and, like other brave men, he would not be deterred from prosecuting his design by the apprehension of danger. In the

plan of this expedition, he displayed both skill and resolution. Instead of wasting time by an attempt to ascend the river, he chose to land where he was least likely to meet with immediate opposition; and such was the celerity of his motions. that had he lived, the chances are that we should have fought two battles in one day. But of what a man might have done, I have nothing to say; let me rather do justice to his successor and his advisers. Of these latter, there is one whom it would be improper not to mention by name—I mean Lieutenant Evans, Deputy Assistant Quarter Master General. The whole arrangement of our troops in order of battle was committed to him; and the judicious method in which they were drawn up, proved that he was not unworthy of the trust. With respect to the determination of the council of war, I choose to be silent. Certain it is that the number of our forces would hardly authorize any desperate attempt; and if government regret the issue of the expedition, I humbly conceive that the fault is, in a great measure, their own; in sending out a force so inconsiderable. On such subjects, however, I do not wish to dwell; though every one must be sensible that 10,000 men might have accomplished what 5,000 could not venture to atttempt.

On the part of the Americans, again, nearly the same blunders were committed which marked

their proceedings during the incursion to Washington; though certainly more science was displayed in the distribution of their forces along their principal position. At Bladensburg, indeed, there were no works; but the troops were badly arranged; here there were not only fortifications, but fortifications constructed in a scientific manner, and troops drawn up in such order, as that, even without their works, many cross fires would have protected their front. But they neglected numerous favourable opportunities of harassing both our advance and retreat. They felled trees, but left no guards to keep them from being removed, and took no advantage of the delays which their removal created. They risked a battle with part of their army, when there was no necessity for it; in a word, they committed all those errors which men generally commit who are not soldiers, and yet love war.

LETTER XV.

HAVING once more received the troops on board, the fleet remained quietly at anchor till the 17th, when, at an early hour, we set sail and stood towards the Patuxent. In this voyage we passed close to Kent Island, and again threw the inhabitants of Annapolis into alarm by approaching almost within gun-shot of their town; but at neither place were hostilities attempted, and on the 19th we arrived, without any adventure, at our former anchorage in the river. Here we brought up, and parties were sent on shore to dig wells in the sand, to which the boats resorted in great numbers for water. Cattle and sheep were likewise purchased from the natives; some of the flour which had been captured, was converted into biscuit, and every preparation seemed to be making for a long voyage.

To facilitate these operations, the fleet now separated, part remaining here, and part proceeding under Admiral Malcombe to the Potomac; while Sir Alexander Cochrane, in the Tonnant, with several frigates and gun-brigs, quitted us

altogether, and set sail, as it was given out, for Halifax. But our situation was by no means agreeable. The climate of this part of America is, at certain seasons, far from healthy; and the prevalence of dysentery through the armament, proved that the unhealthy season had already commenced. Neither did there appear to be any prospect of farther employment. No one talked of a future enterprize, nor was the slightest rumour circulated as to the next point of attack. The death of General Ross, in short, seemed to have disorganized the whole plan of proceedings, and the fleet and army rested idle, like a watch without its main spring.

While things were in this state, while the banks of the rivers continued in our possession, and the interior was left unmolested to the Americans, a rash confidence sprung up in the minds of all, insomuch that parties of pleasure would frequently land without arms, and spend many hours on shore. On one of these occasions, several officers from the 85th Regiment agreed to pass a day together at a farm-house, about a quarter of a mile from the stream; and taking with them ten soldiers, unarmed, to row the boat, a few sailors, and a young midshipman, not more than twelve years of age, they proceeded to put their determination into practice. Leaving the men under the command of their

youthful pilot, to take care of the boat, the officers went on to the house, but had not been there above an hour, when they were alarmed by a shout which sounded as if it came from the river. Looking out, they beheld their party surrounded by seventy or eighty mounted riflemen; the boat dragged upon the beach, and set on fire. Giving themselves up for lost, they continued for an instant, in a sort of stupor; but the master of the house, to whom some kindness had been shown by our people, proved himself grateful, and, letting them out by a back door, directed them to hide themselves in the wood, while he should endeavour to turn their pursuers on a wrong scent. As they had nothing to trust to except the honour of this American, it cannot be supposed that they felt much at ease; but seeing no better course before them, they resigned themselves to his guidance, and plunging into the thicket, concealed themselves as well as they could among the underwood. In the mean time the American soldiers having secured all that were left behind, except the young midshipman, who fled into the wood in spite of the fire, divided into two bodies, one of which approached the house, wh le the other endeavoured to overtake the brave boy. It so chanced that the party in pursuit passed close to the officers in concealment, but by the greatest good fortune did not observe them. They suc-

ceeded, however, in catching a glimpse of the midshipman, just as he had gained the water's edge, and was pushing off a light canoe which he had loosened from the stump of a tree. The barbarians immediately gave chace, firing at the brave lad, and calling out to surrender; but the gallant youth paid no attention either to their voices or their bullets. Launching his little bark, he put to sea with a single paddle, and, regardless of the showers of balls which fell about him, returned alone and unhurt to the ship.

While one party was thus employed, the other hastened to the house in full expectation of capturing the officers. But their host kept his word with great fidelity, and having directed his countrymen towards another farm-house at some distance from his own, and in an opposite quarter from where his guests lay, he waited till they were out of sight, and then joined his new friends in their concealment. Bringing with him such provisions as he could muster, he advised them to keep quiet till dark, when their pursuers having departed, he conducted them to the river, supplied them with a large canoe, and sent them off in perfect safety to the fleet

On reaching their ship, they found the 85th Regiment under arms, and preparing to land, for the purpose of either releasing their comrades from captivity, or inflicting exemplary punishment upon

the farmer by whose treachery it was supposed that they had suffered. But when the particulars of his behaviour were related, the latter alternative was at once abandoned; and it was determined to force a dismissal of the captives, by advancing up the country, and laying waste every thing with fire and sword. The whole of the light brigade was accordingly carried on shore, and halted on the beach, whilst a messenger was sent forward to demand back the prisoners. Such, however, was the effect of his threatening, that the demand was at once complied with, and they returned on board without having committed any ravages, or marched above two miles from the boats.

Besides this trifling debarkation, another little excursion was made by the second and third brigades, the light troops being left most unaccountably on board. Hearing that an encampment was formed a few miles from the left bank of the Potomac, Colonel Brook determined, if possible, to come up with and engage the force there stationed. With this view, two brigades were landed on the night of the 4th of October, and pushed forward at a brisk pace, but the enemy being on the alert, had timely notice of the movement, and retired; by which means our people returned on the 5th, without effecting any thing.

By this time the whole fleet was once more collected together; and crowded the Potomac with

their keels. The Diadem being an old ship and a bad sailer, it was determined to remove from her the troops which she had formerly carried, to fill her with American prisoners, and to send her to England. The Menelaus was likewise dispatched with such officers and soldiers as required the benefit of their native air, to complete the cure of their wounds; and the rest getting under weigh on the 6th, stood directly towards the mouth of the Chesapeake. When we reached the James River, we anchored, and were joined by an American schooner bearing a flag of truce. She brought with her Colonel Thornton, Lieutenant-Colonel Wood, and the rest of the officers and men who had been left behind at Bladensburg, and being under the guidance of Commodore Barney, that gentleman was enabled to discharge his trust even to the very letter.

It may readily be supposed that the meeting between friends thus restored to each other, was very agreeable. But there was another source of comfort which this arrival communicated, of greater importance than the pleasure bestowed upon individuals. In Colonel Thornton we felt that we had recovered a dashing and enterprising officer; one as well calculated to lead a corps of light troops, and to guide the advance of an army, as any in the service. On the whole, therefore, the American schooner was as welcome as if she had been a first-

rate man of war, filled with reinforcements from England.

The wounded being now sent off, and Colonel Wood among the number, the remainder of the fleet again set sail, and reached the mouth of the bay without interruption. Here they were met by a frigate and two brigs, which spoke to the Admiral, and apparently communicated some important intelligence; for we immediately put about, and stood once more up the Chesapeake. The wind, however, blew with great violence, and directly against us. After beating about, therefore, for some time, without gaining any ground, we turned our heads towards the ocean, and, flying between the Capes with amazing velocity, stood out to sea; directing our course towards the S.S.E.; and proceeding at the rate of seven miles an hour under bare poles. The sea ran tremendously high, and the sky was dark and dreary; insomuch that by a landsman the gale might safely be accounted a storm. Under these circumstances, the ship rolling as if she would dip her top-mast in the water, and the waves breaking in at the back windows of the cabin, nothing remained to be done but to go to bed. Thither most of us, accordingly, repaired, and, holding ourselves in our births by clinging to the posts, we amused ourselves by watching the motions of the stools, books, trunks, and other articles, as they floated

majestically from one side of the cabin to the other. But the effects of the gale were not, in every respect, ludicrous. Two small schooners which had been captured at Alexandria and converted into tenders, foundered, and went down; without an opportunity being afforded of saving an individual of their crews.

At length the wind began to moderate, and on the 18th there was a dead calm. In point of comfort, however, I cannot say that much change was experienced, for, though the gale had ceased, the swell still continued; and the motion produced by a heavy sea after a storm, is actually more disagreeable than that occasioned by the storm itself. But on this day the minds of all were set at ease, as to the place whither we were going, a telegraph signal being made to steer for Jamaica. It was likewise understood that we should be there joined by strong reinforcements, and proceed upon a secret expedition against some place on the southern borders of the United States.

The calm which had succeeded the storm, did not last long, for on the 19th a fair breeze sprung up, and sent us, at a moderate and agreeable rate, upon our course. The heat, however, was most oppressive; even awnings being unable to afford any sufficient shelter. We were fast approaching the tropic of Cancer, and every day experienced a greater degree of sultriness; till at length, on the

25th, we crossed that imaginary boundary. Here we were visited, according to custom, by Neptune and his wife; and, as the ceremony of shaving may, perhaps, be unknown to you, I shall beg leave to relate the particulars of this visit.

A clever, active seaman, dressed up grotesquely in various coloured rags, adorned with a long beard made of the stuff which sailors call spun-yarn, and armed with a tri-pronged harpoon, personates the God of the Ocean. Another seaman, arrayed in like manner, except that, instead of a beard, he wears an hideous mask, performs the part of the lady. These are attended by a troop of sea-gods and nymphs, similarly equipped; and, advancing from the bow of the vessel as if just stepped on board, they come forward to the mainmast, and summon before them all such persons as have never sworn the oaths, or previously visited their capitol. At the foot of the mast is placed a large tub full of sea-water, and covered by a piece of canvas, which is held tight by four of their attendants. Upon this unsteady throne is the luckless wight, whom they design to initiate, compelled to sit; and being asked several questions, which he cannot answer, and taking several oaths, very much resembling those said to be administered at Highgate, Neptune proceeds to confer upon him the honour of filiation, by rather an extraordinary process. Two of the sea-nymphs,

generally tall stout fellows, pinion his arms to his sides; and another; bringing a bucket filled with grease and slops from the kitchen, sets it down at his godship's feet, putting a small painting brush into his hand. Neptune now dips his brush into the filth, and proceeds to spread a lather over the face of the novice, taking care to ask questions during the whole process; and if the adopted be simple enough to reply, the brush is instantly thrust into his mouth. As soon as a sufficient quantity of grease is laid upon the face, Neptune next seizes a piece of rusty iron, generally the broken hoop of a water cask, with which he scrapes off all that has been applied. If the novice take all this patiently, his face is washed, and he is permitted to descend from his throne in peace, being dignified with the title of Neptune's son. But if he lose his temper, which most men are inclined to do, a bucket of sea-water is poured upon his head. If this be sufficient to cool his wrath, he suffers no more; but if it only increase his indignation, bucket after bucket is emptied over him, and, at last, the holders of the sail-cloth suddenly retiring, he is plunged, over head, into the tub. To crown all, the unfortunate wretch who has endured these miseries, is fined, by his tormentor, in a gallon of rum; a fine which the force of custom compels him to pay. It must be confessed that this is a barbarous amusement, much resembling

that of the boys, in the fable of the boys and the frogs. Though very agreeable to those who act, and to the lookers on, it is not so to him that suffers.

In this manner many persons were treated, till at length Neptune growing weary from the number of novices, was content to admit the rest to the privileges of initiation, on condition that the fines should be punctually paid; an agreement, into which most of us very thankfully entered.

Next morning, the first object which met our eyes, was the land of Caycos island. We were so close to the shore, when day-light discovered it, that had the wind been at all adverse, we must unquestionably have struck; but being assisted by a fair and gentle breeze, the ships put about immediately, and escaped the danger. Standing out to sea, the fleet now doubled the promontory, and steering round by the other side, sailed on without losing sight of land, till late in the evening.

On the following day, a signal was made from the Admiral's ship, that the Golden Fleece transport, under convoy of the Volcano bomb, should proceed to Port Royal, while the rest of the fleet held their course towards Negril bay. These two vessels accordingly set all sail, and pushed forward by themselves; while the others kept on at a more moderate rate, that none might stray from the convoy; for the West India seas at this time swarm-

ing with American privateers, it was of great consequence to keep the store-ships and heavy transports in the middle of the squadron.

It so chanced, that I took my passage in one of the two ships which went forward by themselves. The wind was fair, and we made great progress, insomuch, that before dark the high land of St. Domingo, on one side, and the mountains of Cuba on the other, were discernible. In spite of the heat, therefore, our voyage soon became truly delightful. Secure of getting on under the influence of the trade winds, we had nothing to distract our thoughts, or keep us from feasting our eyes upon the glorious shores of these two islands; while in addition to the sight of land, which of itself was cheering, we were amused with water-spouts, apparently playing about us in every direction. One of these, however, began to form within a little distance of the ship, and as they are dangerous as well as interesting, a cannon was got ready to break it, before it should reach us. But it did not complete its formation, though I cannot tell why; for, after one spout had risen into the air some height, and another bent down from the clouds, to meet it, they were suddenly carried away in different directions, and fell into the sea with the noise of a cataract.

Among other sources of amusement, our attention was drawn, on the 29th, to a shark, which

made its appearance at the stern of the vessel. A strong hook was immediately prepared, and baited with a piece of salt pork, which, being thrown over, was instantly gulped by the voracious monster. But, as soon as he felt the pain occasioned by the hook in his jaws, he plunged towards the bottom of the sea with such violence, as to render the very taffarel hot, by the rapidity of the cord gliding over it. Having permitted him to go a certain length, he was again hauled up to the surface, where he remained without offering further resistance, whilst a boat was lowered down, and a strong noose thrown over his head. Being thus made fast to the gunwale of the boat, he was brought round to the gangway, when the end of the noose being cast over the main-yard, he was lifted out of the sea and swung upon the ship's deck. Hitherto he had suffered quietly, offering no resistance, and apparently stupified by the pain of his jaw; but he began now to convince us that neither life nor strength had deserted him; lashing with his tail with such violence as speedily to clear the quarter deck, and biting in the most furious manner at every thing within his reach. One of the sailors, however, who seemed to understand these matters more than his comrades, took an axe, and watching his opportunity, at one blow chopped off his tail. He was now perfectly harmless, unless indeed, one had chosen to thrust one's hand into

his mouth; and the same sailor accordingly proceeded to lay him open, and to take out his entrails. And now it was that the tenacity of life, peculiar to these animals, displayed itself. After his heart and bowels were taken out, the shark still continued to exhibit proofs of animation, by biting with as much force as ever, at a bag of carpenter's tools that happened to lie within his reach.

Being cut up, he was distributed in portions among the soldiers and ship's crew. The tail part only, was reserved as the chief delicacy for our cabin, which, though dry and hard, with little flavour or taste, was on the present occasion considered as agreeable food, because it was fresh.

LETTER XVI.

But what I principally relished, in this part of our voyage, was the exquisite beauty of its night-scenery. To an inhabitant of Great Britain, the splendour of a night-scene in these climates is altogether unknown. Shining broad and full in a sky perfectly cloudless, the moon sends forth a clear and mellow lustre, little inferior, in point of strength, to the full twilight in England. By this means you never lose sight of land, either by night or day, as long as your course lies between Cuba and Saint Domingo; whilst the delicious coolness, which follows the setting of the sun, tempts you, in spite of all the whispers of prudence, to expose yourself to dews and damps, rather than forego those pleasures of which they are the bane. Besides, you have constantly the satisfaction of observing yourself move steadily on at the most agreeable of all rates, about five or six miles an hour; a satisfaction far from trifling in a sea life. Then the ocean is so smooth, that scarcely a ripple is seen to break the moon-beams as they fall; whilst the quiet dash of little waves against the ship's side, and the rushing noise occasioned by

the moving of her bow through the water, produce altogether an effect which may, without affectation, be termed absolutely refreshing. It was my common practice to sit for hours after night-fall upon the taffarel, and strain my eyes in the attempt to distinguish objects on shore, or strange sails in the distance.

It so happened, that on the 30th I was tempted to indulge in this idle but bewitching employment, even beyond my usual hour for retiring; and did not quit the deck till towards two o'clock in the morning of the 31st. I had just entered my cabin, and was beginning to undress, when a cry from above, of an enemy in chase, drew me instantly to the quarter deck. On looking a-stern, I perceived a vessel making directly after us, and was soon convinced of the justice of the alarm, by a shot which whistled over our heads. All hands were now called to quarters, the small sails were taken in, and having spoke to our companion, and made an agreement as to position, both ships cleared for action. But the stranger seeing his signal obeyed with so much alacrity, likewise slackened sail, and continuing to keep us in view, followed our wake without approaching nearer. In this state things continued till day-break, we still holding our course, and he hanging back; but as soon as it was light, he set more sail and ran to windward, moving just out of gun-shot, in a parallel di-

rection with us. It was now necessary to fall upon some plan of deceiving him, otherwise there was little probability that he would attack. In the bomb, indeed, the height of the bulwarks served to conceal some of the men ; but in the transport no such screen existed. The troops were, therefore, ordered below, and only the sailors, a few blacks, and the officers, kept the deck. The same expedient was likewise adopted, in part, by Captain Price, of the Volcano, and, in order to give to his ship a still greater resemblance than it already had to a merchantman, he displayed an old faded scarlet ensign, and drew up his fore and mainsail in what sailors term a lubberly manner.

As yet the stranger had shown no colours, but from her build and rigging, there was little doubt as to her country. She was a beautiful schooner, presenting seven ports of a side, and apparently crowded with men, circumstances which immediately led us to believe, that she was an American privateer. The Volcano, on the other hand, was a clumsy strong built ship, carrying twelve guns ; and the Golden Fleence mounted eight ; so that in point of artillery, the advantage was rather on our side ; but the American's sailing was so much superior to that of either of us, that this advantage was more than counterbalanced.

Having dodged us till eight o'clock, and reconnoitred with great exactness, the stranger began

to steer gradually nearer and nearer, till at length it was judged that she was within range. A gun was accordingly fired from the Volcano, and another from the transport, the balls from both of which passed over her, and fell into the sea. Finding herself thus assaulted, she now threw off all disguise, and hung out an American ensign; when, putting her helm up, she poured a broadside, with a volley of musketry, into the transport; and ran along side of the bomb which sailed to windward.

As soon as her flag was displayed, and her intention of attacking discerned, all hands were ordered up; and she received two well-directed broadsides from the Volcano, as well as a warm salute from the Golden Fleece. But such was the celerity of her motion, that she was along side of the bomb in less time than can be imagined; and actually dashing her bow against the other, attempted to carry her by boarding. Captain Price, however, was ready to receive them. The boarders were at their posts in an instant, and Jonathan finding, to use a vulgar phrase, that he had caught a Tartar, left about twenty of his men upon the Volcano's bowsprit, all of whom where thrown into the sea; and filling his sails, sheered off with the same speed with which he had borne down. In attempting to escape, he unavoidably fell somewhat to leeward, and exposed the whole of his deck to the fire of

the transport. A tremendous discharge of musquetry saluted him as he passed; and it was almost laughable to witness the haste with which his crew hurried below, leaving none upon deck except such as were absolutely wanted to work his vessel.

The Volcano had, by this time, filled and gave chace, firing with great precision at his yards and rigging, in the hope of disabling him. But as fortune would have it, none of his important ropes or yards were cut; and we had the mortification to see him, in a few minutes, beyond our reach.

In this affair, a marine officer and two men were killed on board the bomb; and some of the tackling was shot away. The transport suffered nothing, in killed or wounded, having been in a great degree protected from the enemy's fire, by her commodore; and only one rope, I believe a mainstay, was destroyed.

The battle being over, and the chace given up as fruitless, we continued our course, without any other adventure; and before dark, were able to distinguish the blue mountains of Jamaica. St. Domingo and Cuba had both disappeared, and this was now the only land visible, but it was not till the first of November that we could obtain a distinct view of it. Then, indeed, we found ourselves within a few miles of the shore, and coasted along, highly delighted with the prospect before us.

The shores of Jamaica are in general bold and mountainous, but on this side they are peculiarly grand. It appeared to me, that even the Pyrenees, magnificent as they are, were not to be compared, in point of altitude, to the hills now before me; and early in the morning, while yet the mists hung upon their summits and concealed them, the imagination was left to picture to itself what it chose; even the gates of heaven resting upon their tops. It was, in truth, a glorious scene; and as the wind blew light and uncertain, we were permitted, from the slowness of the ship's progress, to enjoy it to the full. Towards evening, indeed, the breeze died entirely away, which compelled us to anchor about eight miles from the harbour of Port Royal.

In spite of the little rest which I had procured during the preceding nights, having sat up till an early hour this morning, to watch several strange sails that hovered about us, I could not bring myself to quit the deck till after midnight, so beautiful, in all respects, were the objects around me. The moon shone with her accustomed brilliancy, and exhibited every crag and tree upon the land, changed and confounded in shape, but still plainly; while the perfume, borne off upon the breeze, was odoriferous in the highest degree. The sound of the waves, likewise, breaking upon the rocks, and the occasional cry of seamen, as they adjusted ropes and sails, together with the sight of several

vessels which took advantage of the night-wind and stood to sea, with canvas glittering in the moon-beams, produced so delightful a combination, as completely rivetted me to my seat; nor was it without much reluctance that I at length yielded to the drowsy god, and descended to my cabin.

Next morning, the ship got under weigh at an early hour, but owing to the unsteadiness of the breeze, it was ten o'clock before we made any satisfactory progrees. As we approached the bay which forms the harbour of Port Royal, a novel and pleasing scene presented itself. The hills dying gradually away, gave place to gentle slopes and green knolls, till towards the entrance, the coast became perfectly level. Pushing forward, we soon found ourselves in a narrow channel between two projecting head-lands, beautifully ornamented with cocoa-nut trees, and so near to each other, that I could with ease have thrown a biscuit from the ship's deck upon either. At the extremity of these necks, just where the bay begins its sweep, stand two well-built forts, bristling with cannon; and at the opposite side may be seen a third, ready to sink whatever hostile fleet should be fortunate enough to pass the first. But these were not the most striking parts of the scene. The water in this streight is remarkably clear, and exhibits with great distinctness the tops and chimneys of houses at the bottom. It will be recol-

lected, that many years ago, an earthquake not only demolished great part of the town of Port Royal, but likewise covered it with the sea; by which means, the site of the harbour was completely changed, and that which was formerly dry land, and a town, became part of the entrance of the bay.

Having doubled the promontories, a rich and extensive prospect meets the eye. You find yourself, as it were, in a large inland lake, the banks of which are covered with plantations of sugar-cane, groves of cocoa-nut and plantain trees, and other woods peculiar to these regions, beautifully interspersed with seats and villages. On your right, is the town of Port Royal, lying nearly on a level with the water, and strongly protected by fortifications, while in various other directions are castles and batteries, adding an appearance of security to that of plenty. The banks, though not lofty, slope gently upwards, with occasional falls or glens, and the back ground is composed, in general, of the rugged tops of distant mountains.

Having waited till the ship dropped anchor, I put myself into a sort of barge rowed by four negroes, and proceeded to Kingston. Though not the capital of the island, Kingston is the largest town in Jamaica. It stands upon the brink of a frith, about nine miles above Port Royal; and thence enjoys all the advantages of the chief mart in this

trading country. Like most other mercantile seaports, it is built without much regard to regularity. The streets, though wide, are in general the reverse of elegant, being composed almost entirely of wooden houses, and by no means remarkable for cleanliness. Of public buildings, it possesses none worthy of notice. Its inns are, however, excellent; and though certainly not moderate in their charges, they are at least more so than those of Bermuda. In a word, it is exactly such a town as one would expect to find, holding the principal commercial rank in a colony where mens' minds seldom aspire beyond the occupations of trade.

Of the intense heat in this place, none but those who have experienced it can form a notion. It is impossible to walk out with any comfort, except before the sun has risen, or after he has set; and even within doors, with the aid of thorough draughts, and all the other expedients usually adopted on such occasions, it is with the utmost difficulty that you can contrive to keep your blood in a moderate degree of temperature. In the town itself, therefore, few of the higher classes reside; the closeness produced by a proximity of houses being in this climate peculiarly insupportable. These accordingly inhabit little villas, called pens, about three or four miles in the country; the master of each family generally retaining a suite of apartments, or perhaps an entire mansion in

some open street, for his own use, when business obliges him to exchange the comfort of fresh air for the suffocating atmosphere of Kingston. Towards the outskirts, indeed, in one direction, a few genteel families inhabit one or two handsome houses, surrounded by extensive gardens and shrubberies; but these are not numerous, and so far from the heat of the town, as to be in a great measure beyond the influence of its smoke, and other nuisances.

During our sojourn in this place, we received the most hospitable attention from several persons of the first distinction. Balls, and other entertainments, were given, at which all the beauty and fashion in this part of the island attended; and for some days I had little leisure or inclination for any other pursuit, than the enjoyment of civilized pleasures; a pursuit which, from long disuse, possessed more than ordinary zest. But, at length, having seen as much of Kingston and its vicinity, as I desired to see, I determined to take advantage of the opportunity which fortune had placed within my reach, and to make an excursion into the heart of the Blue Mountains. To this I was additionally induced by an invitation from an old friend to visit him at Annotto Bay; and as, along with his letter, he sent a horse for my own conveyance, and a mule for the conveyance of my baggage, no difficulty respecting a mode of being

transported, stood in the way to obstruct my design.

Having made up my mind to this journey, I waited till sun-set on the 9th, when starting in the cool of the evening, I reached a little tavern called the Plum-tree, about half an hour after dark. My ride carried me through an open and fertile country, covered with sugar canes, coffee, and such other plants as are cultivated in the low grounds of Jamaica. It was a short one, not more than twelve miles in extent; but I was forced to halt where I did, because I had now gained the foot of the mountains; and if I passed the Plum-tree, well known as a sort of half-way house on such tours, I might travel all night without finding any place of accommodation.

As darkness set in, one of the beautiful peculiarities of a tropical climate, which I had not previously witnessed, came under my observation. The air was filled with fire-flies, which emitting a phosphoric light, something similar to the light of the glow-worm, only more red and brilliant, danced around me like sparks from a smith's anvil, when he is beating a bar of red hot iron. These creatures flutter about with a humming noise, and frequently settle in large swarms upon branches of trees, giving to them the semblance of so many pieces of timber taken newly out of a fire. When viewed by day-light, they are in no way remarka-

ble for their elegance, resembling in the shape of the body a long beetle, which may be seen in the fields after sun-set, without wings or scales. In colour they are a dingy brown, and, like the glow-worm, carry their light in the tail.

As I had not before chanced to see any thing of the kind, and forgot at the moment that such an insect as the fire-fly existed, I was for a few minutes at a loss to what cause to attribute the phenomenon; and was at last indebted to my negro guide for refreshing my memory on the subject. The effect, however, cannot be conceived, without being witnessed. A cluster of two or three glow-worms shine so brilliantly, that they will furnish subject for the commendatory eloquence of any one fortunate enough to perceive them together; but their brilliancy is as a farthing candle to the sun, when compared with that of the fire-fly. Not two or three, but thousands of these creatures dance around, filling the air with a wavering and uncertain glimmer, of the extreme beauty of which no words can convey an adequate conception.

Having passed the night at this tavern, a small cottage kept by a free negro and his wife, I rose two hours before dawn, and prosecuted my journey. From the moment I quitted the Plum-tree, I began gradually to ascend, till, at day-break, I found myself in the midst of the most glorious scenery

that the imagination of a man can conceive. Every thing around was new and romantic. The hills, towering into the very sky, were covered from top to bottom with the richest herbage, and the most luxuriant wood. Rarely could a barren crag be discerned, and when it did appear, it was only a sharp point, or a bold projection pushing itself forward from the midst of the thickest foliage. But what to me formed the most bewitching part of the prospect, was the elegance of the trees, and their perfect dissimilitude to any I had previously beheld. The cocoa-nut and plantain were mingled with the wild-pine and lime-tree; while the cashew and wild-coffee, with numberless other shrubs, loaded at once with fruit and blossom, formed the underwood to these graceful forests.

As yet I had been favoured with a wide and good road, but now it began gradually to narrow, till at last it ended in a path little more distinct than the sheep-tracks over the hills in Scotland. Winding along the sides of the mountains, it brought me frequently to spots, where the wood parting, as if artificially, displayed deep ravines, to look down which, without becoming dizzy, required no little strength of head; whilst above, the same hill continued to stretch itself to a height, far beyond any I had before gazed upon. Presently after, it conducted me gently down into vallies completely shut out from the rest of the world; and

as I descended, I could hear the roar of water, though neither the stream nor the bottom of the glen, could be perceived. On one of these occasions, after passing through a thick grove, I beheld a river of some width, dashing along the glen, and chafing so as to produce the noise of a mighty waterfall. Towards the brink of this river my guide conducted me; when, plunging in, we made our way, with some difficulty, to the opposite bank, and again began to ascend.

For several hours, the same scenery surrounded me, only varied by the occasional appearance of clusters of negro huts. Than these, it is impossible to imagine any species of huts or dwellings more beautifully picturesque. They are constructed of strong limbs of trees, thatched over with straw, and usually ending in a cone; having no windows, but only two, or sometimes four doors, for the purpose of admitting a free current of air. The spots chosen for their erection, are generally small platforms or terraces in the sides of the hills. A little path, similar to that along which I travelled, winds down from their doors to the bottom of the valley, and conducts to the edge of the river, from whence the inhabitants are supplied with water. Other tracts likewise branch off in different directions, some towards the summit, and others along the sides of the mountains; leading, probably, to the fields or spots where the inhabitants labour. These

huts have no chimney, but only a large hole in the roof, to give free passage to the smoke, and I could perceive, by its rise at present, that fires were constantly kept burning.

It would be labour lost, were I to attempt any more minute description of this delightful journey. Every step I took presented something new, and something more grand and sublime than I had just quitted; while the continual fording of the swollen river, (for I crossed the same stream no fewer than eight and twenty times,) gave an additional interest to the scene, arising from the sense of danger. The rainy seasons having just ended, this stream, the Wag-water, a most appropriate name, had not as yet returned to its natural size; but at the fords, which in general would not cover a horse's knees, the depth was such as to moisten the saddle-girths. So great a quantity of water, in a furious mountain-torrent, pouring on with all the violence produced by a steep descent, occasioned no slight pressure upon my steed; nor was it without considerable floundering on his part, and some anxiety on mine, that once or twice we succeeded in making good our passage.

LETTER XVII.

Noon was approaching when my sooty fellow-traveller directed my attention to a neat cottage, romantically situated on the top of a low mound, which stood alone in the middle of stupendous mountains. It commanded one of the most exquisite prospects that fancy can represent. A sort of glen surrounded it on every side, richly and beautifully wooded; behind, rose some of the most lofty of the blue mountains; on the right there was an opening, which admitted a fine view of Annotta Bay; while in the other direction, the hills sloping gradually upwards, presented an inclined plane, covered with fields of sugar-cane, and ending at a considerable distance, in one abrupt and broken ridge.

The cottage in question, was the residence of my friend, and the resting place whither my steps were turned; nor did I experience any regret at finding myself so near my journey's end. The heat had for some time been almost intolerable, and having eaten nothing since the night before, nature began to cry out for repose and repletion. In truth, the welcome which I expe-

rienced was of such a nature, as to take away all desire of wandering farther. We had not met for many years, and since that time, some melancholy changes had taken place in my friend's family; but he received me with all the cordial hospitality which a warm heart produces, and forgot his own private sorrows, that he might not throw a damp over my enjoyments.

Feeling that I had taken sufficient exercise for one day, I did not go out till the morrow; when we rode together round several estates, saw the process of making sugar, and visited several hospitals, with which each estate is supplied for the reception and cure of sick negroes. I likewise made many minute inquiries as to the state and condition of the slaves, inspecting their huts, and even examining their provisions; and I must confess that the result of these inquiries was such, as to destroy much of the abhorrence which I had before felt to the name of slavery. There is something in the idea of bondage very repugnant to the feelings of men born to freedom as an inheritance; nor are there any evils which such men would not undergo to preserve that inheritance. But after all, the misery of the one state, and the happiness of the other, is but ideal. As far as real comforts go, I should pronounce the negro slave, in Jamaica, a happier man than the peasant in England. Like a soldier, he is well fed, supplied

with what clothing he requires, has a comfortable bed to sleep on, is distressed with no cares for the support of his family, and is only obliged, in return for all this, to labour a certain number of hours in the day. It is true that he may be beaten, and cannot resist; but he never is beaten, unless he deserve it: and to a man afflicted, or if you please ennobled by no fine feelings of honour, a beating produces no pain, except what may arise from the strokes themselves.

With respect to the treatment of slaves, again, the outcry so general in England against the cruelty of overseers is quite absurd. No man, however wanting in humanity, is so foolish as to render useless his own property. If he have no better principle to direct him, the same policy which prevents an English farmer from over-working or abusing his horse, will prevent a West India merchant from over-working or abusing his slave. Nor are the slaves prohibited from earning something for themselves. A certain number of hours in each day are at their own disposal, when, if they choose to work on, they are paid so much for their services; if not, they are permitted to amuse themselves in any manner they please. Their food, though coarse, is wholesome, and such as they have been all their lives accustomed to; their houses, though not elegant, are in no respect inferior to the generality of cottages, allowed to the poor by parish

officers in England; and when they are sick, they are removed to airy hospitals, where as much attention is paid to them, as if they were people of rank and consequence. But, above all, they are never distressed with anxiety for their families. They know that their children will receive the same treatment that they have received, that they will never want food, clothing, or an home, and therefore, they die without any of those harrowing dreads, which so frequently madden the death-bed of an English labourer.

But, it will be said, they are slaves; and in the word slavery are comprehended the worst evils that can befal a human being. This is all very well in theory, and no doubt every man born free would risk his life to preserve his liberty; but the most of these slaves have never known what freedom is; and it is absurd to talk of a man pining for he knows not what. Latterly, indeed, thanks to certain humane individuals, who, without possessing the slightest personal knowledge of their situation, have pitied them so loudly, that their compassionate expressions have crossed the Atlantic, they have begun to consider themselves as hardly treated, in being refused the common birth-right of man. The consequence is, that many negroes, who were before cheerful and happy, are now discontented and gloomy, and ripe for the most desperate attempts. Yet, as a proof of their folly

in desiring freedom, unless, indeed, that gift were accompanied with the possession of the islands where they dwell, by far the greater part of those slaves, whom their masters have at any time enfranchised, after wandering about for a while, the most miserable creatures upon earth, return, and beg, as a favour, to be received once more into their original state of slavery.

The process of making sugar is too well known to render it necessary for me to describe it in detail. The sugar-cane being cast into a grinding mill, is pressed till the juice is extracted, which, being conveyed in pipes from the mill to a large caldron, is boiled till it acquire a certain consistency; the scum being regularly taken off as it is thrown up from the bottom. The liquor is then poured into another caldron, and undergoes another boiling; where being left till cool, it is taken out in a solid mass; and when bruised down, becomes the sugar of which we make use. The lees and scum of the sugar again being distilled, produce rum; while the cattle and horses are fed upon the pulp; and thus, of the sugar-plant itself, three different uses are made, all of them important, and all profitable.

Among other curiosities, I was fortunate enough, while in this part of the island, to see something of the Maroons. These are a race of free negroes, who live entirely by themselves, and are treated as the allies and friends of the British government.

They inhabit several villages, or as they are called, towns, in the wildest part of the interior, and generally near the banks of a river. They have their own magistrates, and are governed by laws of their own; but at the head of each little republic is an European, who acts, at once, as ambassador from the whites, and as chief governor of the place. They are found extremely useful in bringing back run-away slaves, receiving a sort of pension for their services, and being supplied with muskets and ammunition, at the expense of the British authorities.

That the Maroons are not the original inhabitants of Jamaica, their colour sufficiently proves. They are not copper-coloured like the natives of America, but quite black, resembling, in almost every particular, the African negro. Their features, however, are not so universally flat; and the hair of many, instead of being woolly and curly, is long and sleek. Some of their women are completely beautiful, with high noses, and lips moderately thick; while their form and make are erect and graceful. Till I beheld these female Maroons, I did not conceive it possible to apply the term beautiful to a being as dark as ebony; but, in truth, so powerful is the effect of regular features and an elegant form, that the difference of complexion is not able to destroy it.

All the Maroons are not, however, of this de-

scription. They are now so much mingled with fugitive slaves, that the original breed is greatly impaired, and appears to be in some danger of becoming totally lost. During the Maroon war, every slave that deserted from his master, was received among them; and these deserters being almost as numerous as the people to whom they fled for refuge, the present generation is a sort of mongrel race, partaking, in most cases, as much of the negro, as of the Maroon feature.

From what part of the world these Maroons have originally come, I cannot pretend to determine. In their features and form, they certainly bear a greater resemblance to Asiatic, than the African negroes; and yet I am not aware, that slaves were at any time transported from the shores of Asia to the West Indies. It is most probable, however, that these people, from whatever quarter of the globe they may have been brought, were, at one time, subject to the same bondage as the present cultivators of the soil. But the event proved, that they were more high-spirited than their flat-nosed brethren; for they soon threw off the yoke, and established themselves in the wilds and mountainous districts of the island. After an unsuccessful attempt to reduce them, they were left in possession of their freedom and their fastnesses; and now live peaceably and quietly, carrying on a little traffic in feathers, birds and skins, with their

Europeans neighbours, and supporting themselves, when near the water, upon fish; and when distant from any stream, chiefly upon the fruit of the plantain tree.

Having spent a few most agreeable days with my friend, on the 13th I set out on my return to Kingston. The scenery through which I passed was, in many respects, different from what had entertained me on my way thither; my guide having led me by another road, in order to avoid the river. The country was in general less grand, and more cultivated; but there were two or three spots even wilder than any I had yet seen. These were occupied by Maroon towns, consisting of two long streets of huts, crossing each other at right angles; each hut being surrounded by a small plot, in which the sweet potatoe and yam, with some of the most common kinds of vegetables were cultivated. The huts themselves resembled, in every particular, the huts of the slaves. Only they were perhaps less neat, and had about them less the appearance of comfort; but in their food and manner of living, the condition of the Maroons seems to be decidedly inferior to that of the others. That the slaves are, in reality, more happy than the free negroes, is proved by the different mode in which they employ themselves. In passing through a village of the former, after the work of the day is finished, you will always find them dancing, or amusing themselves in manly and athletic games.

At whatever hour you may chance to traverse a Maroon town, you will see the inhabitants sitting in lazy indolence at the doors of their cabins, so completely oppressed with what may be termed ennui, that they will hardly take the trouble to lift up their eyes to stare at you as you go along. Except when driven by hunger to seek the plantain trees, they seldom stir beyond their own habitations; unless it be to lead back some fugitive to his master, and to claim the reward. Even their little trade is carried on with those who come among them; few of them thinking it worth while to look for a market, where they may dispose of their commodities.

As it was late before I started, my ride to-day was extremely toilsome, on account of the heat. I did not, therefore, push on to Kingston at once, but stopping at a place called Stoney-hill, passed the night there; and rising early, reached that town by breakfast time, on the following day. I found the ships preparing to sail, the sea-stock embarked, and officers hastening on board; when, congratulating myself on having arrived at a fortunate moment, I made my way to the harbour, and once more took possession of my cabin.

It happened, however, that the ships did not sail so soon as was expected. Time was therefore given me, to examine the town of Port Royal, a circumstance of which I did not fail to avail myself. Not that there is in this small town, much

to recompense the trouble of examination, performed as such an examination must be, under the rays of a vertical sun; but to one little used to a sea life, any thing is better than remaining cooped up within the narrow compass of a ship.

Port Royal is quite the Wapping of Kingston. Full of bustle and confusion, its streets are generally crowded with drunken sailors, labouring negroes, and noisy task-masters. The houses are mean, and the inhabitants of the lowest order; nor is it remarkable for any thing, except the strength of the works by which it is defended. The barracks, indeed, are good and extensive, being meant to contain about a thousand men; but besides these, there is no building in the place worthy of notice; for though, likewise, the dock-yard be of some importance, and rich in stores, it is but little ornamented with architecture; and the only church is as plain and unadorned as possible.

The town itself, being built upon a promontory, is washed on three sides by the sea; and is, besides, surrounted by regular fortifications, well supplied with heavy ordnance. Close to each of the guns which point towards the water, are furnaces for heating shot; and within the ramparts are arranged, at proper intervals, from one another, many mortars of large calibre. In a word, if you view it as a town, your sentence will

be altogether adverse; if as a fortification, you will acknowledge that it is well calculated to effect the purpose for which it was erected; that is, to protect the principal harbour in Jamaica, from insult.

At length, on the morning of the 17th, we got under weigh, and stood to sea. Coasting along with a fair wind, we arrived on the 19th at Negril bay, the place of rendezvous for the whole armament. Here we found great part of the fleet at anchor, the horses landed, and every thing in a state which promised some farther delay. Neither Sir Alexander Cochrane, who was expected to rejoin us with reinforcements from England, nor Admiral Malcombe, were in the bay; and the command remained at present with the Captain of the Asia.

The shores, on this side of Jamaica, are more flat and tame than any I had yet seen. The quantity of wood, however, with which they are covered, even to the edge of the water, gives to them a rich and beautiful appearance; while the sweep of the bay itself is strikingly fine. Sugar-cane seems to be the universal produce of the soil, wherever it is capable of producing any thing; even Indian corn being but little cultivated. Of this last there were here a few fields, and but a few, interspersed among many of the other; as well as some pasture, upon which sheep and cattle

were feeding. The sheep, I believe, are bred in the island; but the cattle are brought over from the Spanish main; few persons attempting to encourage their propagation, so much are they found to degenerate.

Seeing all things quiet, and no likelihood of an immediate change, I determined to go on shore, and having, together with a friend, put my resolution into practice, we provided ourselves with horses, and rode some way up the country. But every thing appeared insipid after my journey through the mountains. The scenery, though rich, was not grand; and but for the view, which from various eminences, we were enabled to procure of the anchorage crowded with shipping, would have been uninteresting.

Our ride was not, therefore, protracted, so as to incur any risk of being left behind, for having penetrated only about ten miles from the beach, we turned our horses' heads, and retraced our steps to the fleet.

In this state affairs continued till the 24th, when, about nine o'olock in the morning, the topmasts of a numerous squadron could be discerned over the eastern promontory. These gradually neared us, till, in a short time, we were able to distinguish the flags of Sir Alexander Cochrane, and Admiral Malcombe, and at last beheld the Tonnant and Royal Oak, accompanied by a large

fleet of troop ships and transports, majestically entering the bay. As may be imagined, our curiosity was strongly excited to learn what troops they contained, and what intelligence they brought; insomuch that they had scarcely dropped anchor when they were boarded from almost every one of the ships which they came to join.

It appeared that this powerful reinforcement consisted of the following forces. The 93d Regiment, a fine corps of Highlanders, mustering nine hundred bayonets; six companies of the 95th rifle corps; two West India Regiments, each eight hundred strong; two squadrons of the 14th Dragoons dismounted; detachments of artillery, rockets, sappers, and engineers; recruits for the different corps already in this part of the world; and though last, not least, Major General Keane to take upon himself the command of the whole. The intelligence brought was likewise interesting, for it informed us of the point whither we were to proceed; and it was soon known throughout the fleet, that the conquest of New Orleans was the object in view.

But before I pursue my narrative farther, having arrived, as it were, at a second commencement, it may be well if I state in full, the number of men which the army now contained. In the first place, then, there were the 4th, 44th, and 85th Regiments originally dispatched from Bourdeaux, and the

21st, which joined the expedition at Bermuda. These battalions being considerably reduced by past service, could not at present muster conjunctly above two thousand two hundred men; and being likewise deprived of the Marine battalion, which had fought beside them in the Chesapeake, they retained no followers except the Artillery, Sappers, &c. which had accompanied them from the first. The whole amount of this corps may, therefore, be estimated at two thousand five hundred men.

Without computing the individual strength of each detachment now arrived, I will venture to fix the aggregate at three thousand five hundred; and thus the whole, taken collectively, will amount to six thousand combatants. That it might somewhat exceed or fall under this computation, I do not deny; but neither the excess nor deficiency could be considerable; and therefore my statement may be received as correct, with very little allowance.

This, it must be confessed, was a formidable power, and such as, had all its parts been trustworthy, might have done much. But in the black corps, little reliance could be placed, especially if the climate should prove colder than was anticipated; consequently, there were not more than four thousand four hundred men, upon whom a general could fully depend.

Together with these forces, were brought out

abundant stores of ammunition, some clothing for the troops, and tents to be used when an opportunity should offer. There were also numerous additions to the commissariat and medical departments; in short, the material of the army was increased in proportion to its increase of number.

To find himself in the chief command of this force, exceeded the expectation, and perhaps the desire, of General Keane. Being a young and dashing officer, he had been selected as most fit to serve under Ross; and having sailed from England before the death of that gallant chief was known, he reached Madeira before his elevation was communicated to him. Young as he was, however, his arrival produced much satisfaction throughout the armament; for though no one entertained a doubt as to the personal courage of Colonel Brook, it was felt that a leader of more experience was wanted on the present expedition.

As soon as the newly-arrived squadron had anchored, the Bay was covered with boats, which conveyed parties of officers from ship to ship, hastening to salute their comrades, and to enquire into the state of things at home. Greetings and hearty embraces were interchanged between friends thus again brought together; and a few passing ejaculations of sorrow bestowed upon those

who could not now take part in the meeting. Many questions were put, relative to persons and places in England; in a word, the day was spent in that species of employment, which can be completely known only to those who have been similarly situated.

LETTER XVIII.

But the period granted for such indulgence was not of long duration, for, on the following morning, the Tonnant, Ramilies, and two brigs, stood to sea, and on the 26th, the rest of the fleet got under weigh, and followed the Admiral. It is impossible to conceive a finer sea-view than this general stir presented. Our fleet amounted now to upwards of fifty sail, many of them vessels of war, which shaking loose their topsails, and lifting their anchors at the same moment, gave to Negril Bay an appearance of bustle such as it has seldom been able to show. . In half an hour all the canvas was set, and the ships moved slowly and proudly from their anchorage, till having cleared the head-lands, and caught the fair breeze which blew without, they bounded over the water with the speed of eagles, and long before dark, the coast of Jamaica had disappeared.

There is something in rapidity of motion, whether it be along a high road, or across the deep, extremely elevating; nor was its effect unperceived on the present occasion. It is true, that there were other causes for the high spirits which now

pervaded the armament, but I question if any one was more efficient in their production, than the astonishing rate of our sailing. Whether the business we were about to undertake would prove bloody, or the reverse, entered not into the contemplation of a single individual in the fleet. The sole subject of remark was the speed with which we got over the ground, and the probability that existed of our soon reaching the point of debarkation. The change of climate, likewise, was not without its effect in producing pleasurable sensations. The farther we got from Jamaica, the more cool and agreeable became the atmosphere; which led us to hope that, in spite of its southern latitude, New Orleans would not be found so oppressively hot as we had been taught to expect.

The breeze continuing to last without interruption, on the 29th we came in sight of the island of Grand Cayman. This is a small speck in the middle of the sea, lying so near the level of the water, as to be unobservable at any considerable distance. Though we passed along with prodigious velocity, a canoe nevertheless ventured off from the shore, and making its way through waves which looked as if they would swallow it up, succeeded in reaching our vessel. It contained a white man and two negroes, who brought off a quantity of fine turtle, which they gave us in exchange for salt pork; and so great

was the value put upon salt provisions, that they bartered a pound and a half of the one for a pound of the other. To us the exchange was very acceptable, and thus both parties remained satisfied with their bargain.

Having lain to till our turtle merchants left us, we again filled and stood our course. The land of Cayman was soon invisible; nor was any other perceived till the 2d of December, when the western shores of Cuba presented themselves. Towards them we now directed the ship's head, and reaching in within a few miles of the beach, coasted along till we had doubled the promontory which forms one of the jaws of the Mexican gulf. While keeping thus close to the shore, our sail was more interesting than usual, for though this side of Cuba is low, it is still picturesque, from the abundance of wood with which it is ornamented. There are likewise several points where huge rocks rise perpendicularly out of the water, presenting the appearance of old baronial castles, with their battlements and lofty turrets; and it will easily be believed, that none of these escaped our observation. The few books which we had brought to sea, were all read, many of them twice and three times through; and there now remained nothing to amuse, except what the variety of the voyage could produce.

But the shores of Cuba were quickly passed, and

the old prospect of sea and sky again met the gaze. There was, however, one circumstance, from which we experienced a considerable diminution of comfort. As soon as we entered the gulf, a short disagreeable swell was perceptible; differing in some respects from that in the Bay of Biscay, but to my mind infinitely more unpleasant. So great was the motion, indeed, that all walking was prevented; but as we felt ourselves drawing every hour nearer and nearer to the conclusion of our miseries, this additional one was borne without much repining. Besides, we found some amusement in watching from the cabin windows, the quantity and variety of weed with which the surface of this gulf is covered. Where it originally grows, I could not learn, though I should think most probably in the gulf itself; but following the course of the stream, it floats continually in one direction; going round by the opposite coast of Cuba, towards the banks of Newfoundland, and extending sometimes as far as Bermuda and the Western Isles.

It is not, however, my intention to continue the detail of this voyage longer than may be interesting; I shall therefore merely state, that, the wind and weather having undergone some variations, it was the 10th of December before the shores of America could be discerned. On that day we found ourselves opposite to the Chandeleur Islands,

and near the entrance of Lake Borgne. There the fleet anchored, that the troops might be removed from the heavy ships, into such as drew least water; and from this and other preparations, it appeared, that to ascend this lake was the plan determined upon.

But before I pursue my narrative farther, it will be well if I endeavour to give some account of the situation of New Orleans, and of the nature of the country against which our operations were directed.

New Orleans is a town of some note, containing from twenty to thirty thousand inhabitants. It stands upon the eastern bank of the Mississippi, in 30° north latitude, and about 110 miles from the Gulf of Mexico. Though in itself unfortified, it is difficult to conceive a place capable of presenting greater obstacles to an invader; and at the same time more conveniently situated with respect to trade. Being built upon a narrow neck of land, confined on one side by the river, and on the other by impassable morasses, its means of defence require little explanation; and as these morasses extend only a few miles, and are succeeded by Lake Pontchartrain, which again communicates through Lake Borgne,* with the sea, its peculiar

* These are, properly speaking, one and the same lake. From the entrance, however, as far as Ship Island, is called by the inhabitants Lake Borgne, and all above that point goes under the name of Lake

commercial advantages must be equally apparent. It is by means of the former of these Lakes, indeed, that intercourse is maintained between the city and the northern parts of West Florida, of which it is the capital; a narrow creek, called, in the language of the country, a Bayou or Bayouke, navigable for vessels drawing less than six feet water, running up through the marsh, and ending within two miles of the town. The name of this creek is the Bayouke of St. John, and its entrance is defended by works of considerable strength.

But to exhibit its advantages in a more distinct point of view, it will be necessary to say a few words respecting that mighty river upon which it stands. The Mississippi, (a corruption of the word Mechasippi, signifying, in the language of the natives, 'the father of rivers,') is allowed to be inferior, in point of size and general navigability, to few streams in the world. According to the Sioux Indians, it takes its rise from a large swamp, and is increased by many rivers emptying themselves into its course as far as the fall of St. Anthony, which, by their account, is upwards of seven hundred leagues from its source. But this fall, which is formed by a rock thrown across the channel, of about twelve feet perpendicular height, is known to be eight hundred leagues from the sea; and

Pontchartrain. They are both extremely shallow, varying from 12 to 6 feet in depth.

therefore the whole course of the Mississippi, from its spring to its mouth, may be computed at little short of 5,000 miles.

Below the fall of St. Anthony, again, the Mississippi is joined by a number of rivers considerable in point of size, and leading out of almost every part of the continent of America. These are the St. Pierre, which comes from the west; St. Croix, from the east; the Moingona, which is said to run 150 leagues from the west, and forms a junction about 250 below the fall; and the Illinois, which rises near the Lake Michigan, 200 leagues east of the Mississippi.

But by far the most important of these auxiliary streams is the Missouri, the source of which is as little known as that of the Father of Rivers himself. It has been followed by traders upwards of 400 leagues, who traffic with the tribes which dwell upon its banks, and obtain an immense return for European goods. The mouth of this river is five leagues below that of the Illinois, and is supposed to be 800 from its source, which, judging from the flow of its waters, lies in a north-west direction from the Mississippi. It is remarkable enough, that the waters of this river are black and muddy, and prevail over those of the Mississippi, which, running with a clear and gentle stream till it meets with this addition, becomes from that time both dark and rapid.

The next river of note is the Ohio, which, taking its rise near Lake Erie, runs from the north-east to the south-west, and joins the Mississippi about seventy leagues below the Missouri. Besides this, there are the St. Francis, an inconsiderable stream, and the Arkansas, which is said to originate in the same latitude with Santa Fé in New Mexico, and which, holding its course nearly 300 leagues, falls in about 200 above New Orleans. Sixty leagues below the Arkansas, comes the Yazous from the north-east; and about fifty-eight nearer to the city, is the Rouge, so called from the colour of its waters, which are of a reddish dye, and tinge those of the Mississippi at the time of the floods. Its source is in New Mexico, and after running about 200 leagues, it is joined by the Noir thirty miles above the place where it empties itself into the Mississippi.

Of all these rivers, there is none which will not answer the purposes of commerce, at least to a very considerable extent; and as they join the Mississippi above New Orleans, it is evident that this city may be considered as the general mart of the whole. Whatever nation, therefore, chances to possess this place, possesses in reality the command of a greater extent of country than is included within the boundary line of the whole United States; since from every direction are goods, the produce of East, West, North, and South America,

sent down by the Mississippi to the Gulf. But were New Orleans properly supplied with fortifications, it is evident that no vessels could pass without the leave of its governor; and therefore is it that I consider that city as of greater importance to the American government, than any other within the compass of their territories.

Having said so much on its commercial advantages, let me now point out more distinctly than I have yet done, the causes which contribute to its safety from all hostile attempts. The first of these is the shallowness of the river at its mouth, and the extreme rapidity of the current. After flowing on in one prodigious sheet of water, varying in depth from one hundred to thirty fathoms, the Mississippi, previous to its joining the Mexican Gulf, divides into four or five mouths, the most considerable of which is encumbered by a sand-bank, continually liable to shift. Over this bank, no vessel drawing above seventeen feet water, can pass; when once across, however, there is no longer a difficulty in being floated; but to anchor is hazardous, on account of the huge logs which are constantly carried down the stream. Should one of these strike the bow of the ship, it would possibly dash her to pieces; while, independent of this, there is always danger of drifting, or losing anchors, owing to the number of sunken logs which the under-current bears along within

a few feet of the bottom. All vessels ascending the river are accordingly obliged, if the wind be foul, to make fast to the trees upon the banks; because, without a breeze at once fair and powerful, it is impossible to stem the torrent.

But besides this natural obstacle to invasion, the mouth of the river is defended by a fort, which, from its situation, may be pronounced impregnable. It is built upon an artificial causeway, and is surrounded on all sides by swamps totally impervious, which extend on both sides of the river to a place called the *Detour des Anglais*, within twenty miles of the city. Here two other forts are erected, one on each bank. Like that at the river's mouth, these are surrounded by a marsh, a single narrow path conducting from the commencement of firm ground to the gates of each. If, therefore, an enemy should contrive to pass both the bar and the first fort, he must here be stopped, because all landing is prevented by the nature of the soil; and however fair his breeze may have hitherto been, it will not now assist his farther progress. At this point the Mississippi winds almost in a circle, insomuch that vessels which arrive are necessitated to make fast, till a change of wind occur.

From the Detour des Anglais towards New Orleans, the face of the country undergoes an alteration. The swamp does not, indeed, end, but it narrows off to the right, leaving a space of firm

ground, varying from three to one mile in width, between it and the river. At the back of this swamp, again, which may be about six or eight miles across, come up the waters of Lake Pontchartrain, and thus a neck of arable land is formed, stretching for some way above the city. The whole of these morasses are covered, as far as the Detour, with tall reeds; a little wood now succeeds, skirting the open country, but this is only a mile in depth, when it again gives place to reeds. Such is the aspect of that side of the river upon which the city is built; with respect to the other, I can speak with less confidence, having seen it but cursorily. It appears, however, to resemble this in almost every particular, except that it is more wooded, and less confined with marsh. Both sides are flat, containing no broken ground, or any other cover for military movements; for on the open shore there are no trees, except a few in the gardens of those houses which skirt the river, the whole being laid out in large fields of sugar-cane, separated from one another by rails and ditches.

From this short account of the country, the advantages possessed by a defending army must be apparent. To approach by the river is out of the question, and therefore an enemy can land only from the Lake. But this can be done no where, exceptwhere creeks or *bayous* offer conveniences for that purpose, because the banks of the lake are

universally swampy ; and can hardly supply footing for infantry, far less for the transportation of artillery. Of these, however, there are not above one or two which could be so used. The Bayou of St. John is one ; but it is too well defended, and too carefully guarded for any attempts ; and the Bayou of Catiline is another, about ten miles below the city. That this last might be found useful in an attack, was proved by the landing effected by our army at that point ; but what is the consequence ? The invaders arrive upon a piece of ground, where the most consummate generalship will be of little avail. If the defenders can but retard their progress ; which, by crowding the Mississippi with armed vessels, may very easily be done, the labour of a few days will cover this narrow neck with entrenchments ; while the opposite bank, remaining in their hands, they can at all times gall their enemy with a close and deadly cannonade. Of wood, as I have already said, or broken ground which might conceal an advance, there exists not a particle. Every movement of the assailants must, therefore, be made under their eyes ; and as one flank of their army will be as well defended by morass, as the other by the river, they may bid defiance to all attempts at turning.

Such are the advantages of New Orleans ; and now it is only fair, that I should state its disadvantages : these are owing solely to the climate.

From the swamps with which it is surrounded, there arise, during the summer months, exhalations extremely fatal to the health of its inhabitants. For some months of the year, indeed, so deadly are the effects of the atmosphere, that the garrison is withdrawn, and most of the families retire from their houses to more genial spots, leaving the town as much deserted, as if it had been visited by a pestilence. Yet, in spite of these precautions, agues and intermittent fevers abound here at all times. Nor is it wonderful that this should be the case; for independent of the vile air which the vicinity of so many putrid swamps occasions, this country is more liable than perhaps any other, to sudden and severe changes of temperature. A night of keen frost, sufficiently powerful to produce ice, a quarter of an inch in thickness, frequently follows a day of intense heat; while heavy rains and bright sunshine often succeed each other several times, in the course of a few hours. But these changes, as may be supposed, occur only during the winter; the summer being one continued series of intolerable heat and deadly fog.

Of all these circumstances, the conductors of the present expedition were not ignorant. To reduce the forts which command the navigation of the river, it was conceived, was a task too difficult to be attempted; and for any ships to pass without this reduction, was impossible. Trusting, therefore,

that the object of the enterprize was unknown to the Americans, Sir Alexander Cochrane and General Keane determined to effect a landing somewhere on the banks of the Lake; and pushing directly on to take possession of the town, before any effectual preparation could be made for its defence. With this view the troops were removed from the larger into the lighter vessels, and these, under convoy of such gun-brigs as the shallowness of the water would float, began on the 13th to enter Lake Borgne. But we had not proceeded far, when it was apparent that the Americans were well acquainted with our intentions, and ready to receive us. Five large cutters, armed with six heavy guns each, were seen at anchor in the distance, and as all endeavours to land, till these were captured, would have been useless, the transports and largest of the gun-brigs cast anchor, while the smaller craft gave chase to the enemy.

But these cutters were built purposely to act upon the Lake. They accordingly set sail, as soon as the English cruisers were within a certain distance, and running on, were quickly out of sight, leaving the pursuers fast aground. To permit them to remain in the hands of the enemy, however, would be fatal, because, as long as they commanded the navigation of the Lake, no boats could venture to cross. It was, therefore, determined at all hazards, and at any expense, to take them; and

since our lightest craft could not float where they sailed, a flotilla of launches and ship's barges was got ready for the purpose.

This flotilla consisted of fifty open boats; most of them armed with a carronade in the bow, and well manned with volunteers from the different ships of war. The command was given to Captain Lockier, a brave and skilful officer, who immediately pushed off; and about noon, came in sight of the enemy, moored fore and aft, with the broadsides pointing towards him. Having pulled a considerable distance, he resolved to refresh his men before he hurried them into action; and, therefore, letting fall grapplings just beyond reach of the enemy's guns, the crews of the different boats coolly ate their dinner.

As soon as that meal was finished, and an hour spent in resting, the boats again got ready to advance. But, unfortunately, a light breeze which had hitherto favoured them, now ceased to blow, and they were accordingly compelled to make way only with the oar. The tide also ran strong against them, at once increasing their labour, and retarding their progress; but all these difficulties appeared trifling to British sailors; and giving an hearty cheer, they moved steadily onward in one extended line.

It was not long before the enemy's guns opened upon them, and a tremendous shower of balls

saluted their approach. Some boats were sunk, others disabled, and many men were killed and wounded; but the rest pulling with all their might, and occasionally returning the discharges from their comrades, succeeded, after an hour's labour, in closing with the Americans. The marines now began a deadly discharge of musketry; while the seamen, sword in hand, sprang up the vessels' sides in spite of all opposition; and sabring every man that stood in the way, hauled down the American ensign, and hoisted the British flag in its place.

One cutter, however, which bore the commodore's broad pennant, was not so easily subdued. Having noted its pre-eminence, Captain Lockier directed his own boat against it; and happening to have placed himself in one of the lightest and fastest sailing barges in the flotilla, he found himself along side of his enemy, before any of the others were near enough to render him the smallest support. But nothing dismayed by odds so fearful, the gallant crew of this small bark, following their leader, instantly leaped on board the American. A desperate conflict now ensued, in which Captain Lockier received several severe wounds; but after fighting from the bow to the stern, the enemy were at length overpowered; and other barges coming up to the assistance of their commander, the commodore's flag shared the same fate with the others.

Having thus destroyed all opposition in this quarter, the fleet again weighed anchor, and stood up the Lake. But we had not been many hours under sail, when ship after ship ran aground: such as still floated were, therefore, crowded with the troops from those which could go no farther, till finally the lightest vessel stuck fast; and the boats were of necessity hoisted out, to carry us a distance of upwards of thirty miles. To be confined for so long a time, as the prosecution of this voyage would require, in one posture, was of itself no very agreeable prospect; but the confinement was but a trifling misery, when compared with that which arose from the change in the weather. Instead of a constant bracing frost, heavy rains, such as an inhabitant of England cannot dream of, and against which no cloak will furnish protection, began. In the midst of these were the troops embarked in their new and straitened transports, and each division, after an exposure of ten hours, landed upon a small desert spot of earth, called Pine Island, where it was determined to collect the whole army, previous to its crossing over to the main.

Than this spot, it is scarcely possible to imagine any place more completely wretched. It was a swamp, containing a small space of firm ground at one end, and almost wholly unadorned with trees of any sort or description. There were, indeed, a few stinted firs upon the very edge of the

water; but these were so diminutive in size, as hardly to deserve an higher classification than among the meanest of shrubs. The interior was the resort of wild ducks and other water fowl; and the pools and creeks with which it was intercepted abounded in dormant aligators.

Upon this miserable desert, the army was assembled, without tents or huts, or any covering to shelter them from the inclemency of the weather: and in truth we may fairly affirm, that our hardships had here their commencement. After having been exposed all day to a cold and pelting rain, we landed upon a barren island, incapable of furnishing even fuel enough to supply our fires. To add to our miseries, as night closed, the rain generally ceased, and severe frosts set in; which congealing our wet clothes upon our bodies, left little animal warmth to keep the limbs in a state of activity; and the consequence was, that many of the wretched negroes, to whom frost and cold were altogether new, fell fast asleep, and perished before morning.

For provisions, again, we were entirely dependent upon the fleet. There were here no living creatures which would suffer themselves to be caught; even the water-fowls being so timorous, that it was impossible to approach them within musket shot. Salt meat and ship biscuit were, therefore, our food, moistened by a small allowance

of rum ; fare, which, though no doubt very wholesome, was not such as to reconcile us to the cold and wet under which we suffered.

On the part of the navy, again, all these hardships were experienced in a four-fold degree. Night and day were boats pulling from the fleet to the island, and from the island to the fleet ; for it was the 21st before all the troops were got on shore ; and as there was little time to inquire into men's turns of labour, many seamen were four or five days continually at the oar. Thus, they had not only to bear up against variety of temperature, but against hunger, fatigue, and want of sleep in addition ; three as fearful burdens as can be laid upon the human frame. Yet, in spite of all this, not a murmur nor a whisper of complaint could be heard throughout the whole expedition. No man appeared to regard the present, while every one looked forward to the future. From the General, down to the youngest drum-boy, a confident anticipation of success seemed to pervade all ranks ; and in the hope of an ample reward in store for them, the toils and grievances of the moment were forgotten. Nor was this anticipation the mere offspring of an over-weaning confidence in themselves. Several Americans had already deserted, who entertained us with accounts of the alarm experienced at New Orleans. They assured us that there were not at present 5,000 soldiers in the

State; that the principal inhabitants had long ago left the place; that such as remained were ready to join us as soon as we should appear among them; and that, therefore, we might lay our account with a speedy and bloodless conquest. The same persons likewise dilated upon the wealth and importance of the town, upon the large quantities of government stores there collected, and the rich booty which would reward its capture; subjects well calculated to tickle the fancy of invaders, and to make them unmindful of immediate afflictions, in the expectation of so great a recompense.

LETTER XIX.

WHILE the troops were thus assembling, an embassy was dispatched to the Chactaws, a tribe of Indians with whom our government chanced to be in alliance. Along with this embassage I had the good fortune to be sent; and a most amusing expedition it proved to be.

We set sail in a light schooner, and running along the coast till we came to a district not far from Apalachicola, pushed our vessel into a creek, and landed. Proceeding a short distance from the shore, we arrived at a considerable settlement of these savages; as singular a collection of human habitations as ever I beheld. It consisted of upwards of thirty huts, composed of reeds and branches of trees, erected in the heart of a wood, without any regard to form or regularity; each hut standing at a short distance from the rest. At the doors of these huts sat the men, in a posture of the most perfect indolence, with their knees bent upwards, their elbows resting upon their knees, and their chins upon their hands. Not a word was interchanged between man and man, while they appeared to be totally absorbed, each in his

own private contemplations. The women, however, were differently employed. Upon them, indeed, all the toil of domestic economy seemed to have devolved; for they were carrying water, splitting wood, lighting fires, and cooking provisions. Some children, though not so many as one would have expected, from the extent of the settlement, were likewise playing about; but their sports had little of the spirit of European games; and frequently ended in quarrels and combats.

On our approach, two men rose from the doors of their huts, and came to meet us. These proved to be the chief, and the principal warrior of the tribe; the first an elderly infirm person, and the last a man of fierce countenance, probably about the age of forty. They were not, however, distinguished from their countrymen by any peculiarity of dress; being arrayed, as the others were, in buffalo hides, with a loose scarf of cotton thrown over one shoulder, and wrapped round their loins; the size of their ornaments alone indicated that they were persons of consequence, the king having two broad pieces of gold suspended from his ears, and bracelets of the same metal round his wrists; while the warrior's ears were graced with silver rings, and a whole Spanish dollar hung from his nose. With these men, Colonel Nickolls of the Marines, who conducted the embassy, was well acquainted, having been previously appointed Ge-

neralissimo of all their forces; and they therefore extended to us the right hand of friendship, and conducted us into the largest hut in the town.

The rest of the warriors were by this time roused from their lethargy, and soon began to crowd about us; so that in a few minutes the hut was filled with upwards of an hundred savages, each holding in his hand the fatal tomahawk, and having his scalping knife suspended from a belt fastened round his middle. The scene was now truly singular. There is a solemnity about the manner of an Indian chief extremely imposing; and this, joined with the motions which were meant to express welcome, compelled me, almost in spite of myself, to regard these half-naked wretches with veneration.

With the form, complexion, and costume of an American Indian, most Englishmen are well acquainted. In stature, they hardly come up to the common height of an European, and in appearance of robustness they are greatly inferior, being generally spare and slender in their make. Nor, indeed, do they at all equal the natives of Europe in strength. Their agility is superior to ours, but in muscular power they fall much short of us. Their complexion is a dark red, resembling brick-dust rather than copper; their hair is universally long, coarse, and black; they have little or no beard, and the body is entirely smooth. Their

features are high, and might perhaps be regular, were nature left to herself; but they are usually twisted and distorted into the most frightful shapes, with the view of adding to the ferocity of their looks. Their dress is of the simplest kind, consisting partly of the skins of wild beasts, and party of a scarf, made of cotton cloth. For their legs and feet they have no covering, and instead of a cap, they wear their own hair twined into a knot, and ornamented with various coloured feathers. Besides the tomahawk and scalping knife, each man is armed with a rifle or firelock, in the use of which they are exceedingly dexterous.

The women, again, are as much the reverse of beautiful as it is easy to conceive. Being forced by their husbands to undergo the greatest fatigues, and to perform the most menial offices, their air has in it nothing of the commanding dignity which characterizes that of the men. On the contrary, they are timid and servile, never approaching the other sex without humble prostrations; while their shape is spoiled by hard labour, and their features disfigured with ornaments. Whenever the tribe marches, they are loaded with the children, and all culinary utensils, the haughty warrior condescending to carry nothing except his arms; and as soon as it halts, they are condemned to toil for the benefit of the men, who throw themselves upon the ground, and doze till their meal is prepared.

But I must not attempt to describe the manners and customs of this strange people, which have been so frequently and so much better described already. I would rather relate such incidents as fell under my own immediate observation, without suffering my simple narrative to aim at a dignity to which it is not entitled.

Having brought with us an interpreter, we were informed by him that the king declined entering upon business till after the feast. This was speedily prepared, and laid out upon the grass, consisting of lumps of Buffalo flesh, barely warmed through, and swimming in blood; with cakes of Indian corn and manioc. Of dishes and plates, there were none. The meat was brought in the hand of the females who had dressed it, and placed upon the turf; the warriors cut slices from it with their knives; and holding the flesh in one hand, and the cake in the other, they eat, as I thought, rather sparingly, and in profound silence. Besides these more substantial viands, there were likewise some minced-meats of an extraordinary appearance, served up upon dried hides. Of these the company seemed to be particularly fond, dipping their hands into them without ceremony, and thus conveying the food to their mouths; but for my own part, I found it sufficiently difficult to partake of the raw flesh, and could not overcome my loathing so much as to taste the mince.

When the remnant of the food was removed, an abundant supply of rum, which these people had received from our fleet, was produced. Of this they swallowed large potations; and, as the spirit took effect, their taciturnity gave way before it; till at last, speaking all together, each endeavoured, by elevating his voice, to drown the voices of his companions, and a tremendous shouting was the consequence. Springing from the ground, where hitherto they had sat cross-legged, many of them likewise began to jump about, and exhibit feats of activity; nor was I without apprehension that this riotous banquet would end in bloodshed. The king and chief warrior alone still retained their senses sufficiently unclouded to understand what was said. From them, therefore, we obtained a promise, that the tribe would afford to the expedition every assistance in their power; after which we retired for the night to a hut assigned for our accommodation, leaving our wild hosts to continue the revel as long as a single drop of spirits remained.

On the following morning, having presented the warriors with muskets and ammunition, we departed, taking with us the two chiefs at their own request. For this journey they had equipped themselves in a most extraordinary manner; making their appearance in scarlet jackets, which they had obtained from Colonel Nickolls, old fa-

shioned steel-bound cocked hats, and shoes. Trowsers they would not wear, but permitted their lower parts to remain with no other covering than a girdle tied round their loins; and sticking scalping knives in their belts, and holding tomahawks in their hands, they accompanied us to the fleet, and took up their residence with the Admiral.

In the mean time, the disembarkation was going on with much spirit. The cutters being taken, and all difficulties removed, the troops began, on the 16th, to quit the ships, and on the 21st, were assembled in force upon Pine Island. But before they could cross over to the main, it was necessary that some arrangements should be made, and that the different battalions should be divided into corps and brigades. With this design, General Keane reviewed his army on the 22d, and distributed it into the following order.

Instead of a light brigade, he determined to form three battalions into an advanced guard. The regiments appointed to this service, were the 4th, 85th, and 95th; and as an officer of courage and enterprising talent is required to lead the advance of an army, they were put under the command of Colonel Thornton. Attached to this corps of infantry, were a party of rocket-men, and two light three-pounder guns; a species of artillery convenient enough, where celerity of movement is alone regarded, but of very little service in the field.

The rest of the troops were arranged as before into two brigades. The first, composed of the 21st, 44th, and one black regiment, was intrusted to Colonel Brook; and the second, containing the 93d, and the other black corps, to Colonel Hamilton, of the 7th West India regiment. To each of these, a certain proportion of artillery and rockets was allotted; while the dragoons, who had brought their harness and other appointments on shore, remained as a sort of body-guard to the General, till they should provide themselves with horses.

The adjustment of these matters having occupied a considerable part of the 22d, it was determined that all things should remain as they were till next morning. Boats, in the mean time, began to assemble from all quarters, supplies of ammunition were packed, so as to prevent the possibility of damage from moisture, and stores of various descriptions were got ready. But it appeared, that even now, many serious inconveniences must be endured, and obstacles surmounted, before the troops could reach the scene of action. In the first place, from Pine Island to that part of the main towards which prudence directed us to steer, was a distance of no less than 80 miles. This, of itself, was an obstacle, or at least an inconvenience of no slight nature, for should the weather prove boisterous, open boats heavily laden with soldiers, would stand little chance of escaping destruction.

in the course of so long a voyage. In the next place, and what was of infinitely greater importance, it was found that there were not throughout the whole fleet, a sufficient number of boats to transport above one-third of the army at a time. But to land in divisions, would expose our forces to be attacked in detail, by which means, one party might be cut to pieces before the others could arrive to its support. The undertaking was, therefore, on the whole, extremely dangerous, and such as would have been probably abandoned by more timid leaders. Ours, however, were not so to be alarmed. They had entered upon a hazardous business, in whatever way it should be prosecuted; and since they could not work miracles, they resolved to lose no time in bringing their army into the field, in the best manner which circumstances would permit.

With this view, the advance, consisting of 1,600 men, and two pieces of cannon, was next morning embarked. I have already stated that there is a small creek, called the Bayou de Catiline, which runs up from Lake Pontchartrain through the middle of an extensive morass, about ten miles below New Orleans. Towards this creek were the boats directed, and here it was resolved to effect a landing. When we set sail, the sky was dark and lowering, and before long, a heavy rain began to fall. Continuing without intermission

during the whole of the day, towards night it as usual ceased, and was succeeded by a sharp frost; which taking effect upon men thoroughly exposed, and already cramped by remaining so long in one posture, rendered our limbs completely powerless. Nor was there any means of dispelling the benumbing sensation, or effectually resisting the cold. Fires of charcoal, indeed, were lighted in the sterns of the boats, and were suffered to burn as long as day-light lasted; but as soon as it grew dark, they were of necessity extinguished, lest the flame should be seen by row-boats from the shore, and an alarm be thus communicated. Our situation was, therefore, the reverse of comfortable; since even sleep was denied us, from the apprehension of fatal consequences.

Having remained in this uncomfortable state till midnight, the boats cast anchor, and hoisted awnings. There was a small piquet of the enemy stationed at the entrance of the creek, by which we meant to effect our landing. This it was absolutely necessary to surprise; and while the rest lay at anchor, two or three fast sailing barges were sent on to execute the service. Nor did they experience much difficulty in accomplishing their object. Nothing, as it appeared, was less dreamt of by the Americans than an attack from this quarter, consequently, no persons could be less on their guard than the party here stationed. The

officer who conducted the force sent against them, found not so much as a single sentinel posted; but having landed his men at two places, above and below the hut which they inhabited, extended his ranks so as to surround it, and closing gradually in, took them all fast asleep, without noise or resistance.

When such time had been allowed as was deemed sufficient for the accomplishment of this undertaking, the flotilla again weighed anchor, and without waiting for intelligence of success, pursued their voyage. Hitherto we had been hurried along at a rapid rate by a fair breeze, which enabled us to carry canvas; but this now left us, and we made way only with rowing. Our progress was, therefore, considerably retarded, and the risk of discovery heightened by the noise which that labour necessarily occasions; but in spite of all this, we reached the entrance of the creek by dawn; and about nine o'clock, were safely on shore.

The place where we landed was as wild as it is possible to imagine. Wherever we looked, nothing was to be seen except one huge marsh, covered with tall reeds; not a house, nor a vestige of human industry could be discovered; and even of trees, there were but a few growing upon the banks of the creek. Yet it was such a spot as, above all others, favoured our operations. No eye

could watch us, or report our arrival to the American General. By remaining quietly among the reeds, we might effectually conceal ourselves from notice ; because, from the appearance of all around, it was easy to perceive that the place which we occupied was seldom, if ever before marked with a human footstep. Concealment, however, was the thing of all others which we required, for be it remembered, that there were now only sixteen hundred men on the main land. The rest were still at Pine Island, where they must remain till the boats which had transported us should return for their conveyance, consequently many hours must elapse before this small corps could be either reinforced or supported. If, therefore, we had sought for a point where a descent might be made, in secrecy and safety, we could not have found one better calculated for that purpose than the present; because it afforded every means of concealment to one part of our force, until the others should be able to come up.

It was, therefore, confidently expected, that no movement would be made previous t the arrival of the other brigades ; but, in our expectations of quiet, we were deceived. The deserters who had come in, and accompanied us as guides, assured the General that he had only to show himself, when the whole district would submit. They repeated, that there were not five thousand men in

arms throughout the state ; that of these, not more than twelve hundred were regular soldiers, and that the whole was at present several miles on the opposite side of the town, expecting an attack on that quarter, and apprehending no danger on this. These arguments, together with the nature of the ground on which we stood, so ill calculated for a proper distribution of troops, in case of attack, and so well calculated to hide the movements of a force acquainted with all the passes and tracks which, for aught we knew, intersected the morass, induced our leader to push forward at once into the open country. As soon, therefore, as the advance was formed, and the boats had departed, we began our march, following an indistinct path along the edge of a ditch or canal. It was not, however, without many checks that we were able to proceed. Other ditches, similar to that whose course we pursued, frequently stopped us by running in a cross direction, and falling into it at right angles. These were too wide to be leaped, and too deep to be forded ; consequently, on all such occasions, the troops were obliged to halt, while bridges were hastily constructed of what materials could be procured, and thrown across.

Having advanced in this manner for several hours, we, at length, found ourselves approaching a more cultivated region. The marsh became gradually less and less continued, being intercepted

by wider spots of firm ground; and the reeds gave place, by degrees, to wood; and the wood to inclosed fields. Upon these, however, nothing grew, harvest having long ago ended. They presented, therefore, but a melancholy appearance, being covered with the stubble of sugar-cane, which resembled the reeds we had just quitted, in every thing except altitude. Nor as yet was any house or cottage to be seen. Though we knew, therefore, that human habitations could not be far off, it was impossible to guess where they lay, or how numerous they might prove; and as we could not tell whether our guides might not be deceiving us, and whether ambuscades might not be laid for our destruction, as soon as we should arrive where troops could conveniently act, our march was now conducted with more caution and regularity.

But in a little while, some groves of orange trees presented themselves; on passing which, two or three farm-houses appeared. Towards these, our advanced companies immediately hastened, with the hope of surprising the inhabitants, and preventing any alarm from being raised. Hurrying on at double quick time, they surrounded the buildings, succeeded in securing the inmates, and capturing several horses; but becoming rather careless in watching their prisoners, one man contrived to effect his escape; after which, all hope of eluding observation was laid aside. The rumour

of our landing would, we knew, spread faster than we could march; and it now only remained to make that rumour as terrible as possible.

With this view, the column was ordered to widen its files, and to present as formidable an appearance as could be assumed. Changing our order, therefore, we marched, not in sections of eight or ten abreast, but in pairs, and thus contrived to cover with our small division as large a track of ground, as if we had mustered thrice our present numbers. Our steps were likewise quickened, that we might gain, if possible, some advantageous position, where we might be able to cope with any force that might attack us; and thus hastening on, we soon arrived at the main road, which leads directly to New Orleans. Turning to the right, we then advanced in the direction of that town for about a mile; when having reached a spot where it was considered that we might encamp in comparative safety, our little column halted; the men piled their arms, and a regular bivouac was formed.

The country where we had now established ourselves, answered, in every respect, the description I have already given of the neck of land on which New Orleans is built. It was a narrow plain of about a mile in width, bounded on one side by the Mississippi, and on the other by the marsh from which we had just emerged. Towards the open ground, this marsh was covered

with dwarf-wood, having the semblance of a forest, rather than of a swamp; but on trying the bottom, it was found that both characters were united, and that it was impossible for a man to make his way among the trees, so boggy was the soil upon which they grew. In no other quarter, however, was there a single hedge-row, or plantation of any kind; excepting a few apple and other fruits trees in the gardens of such houses as were scattered over the plain, the whole being laid out in large fields for the growth of sugar-cane; a plant which seems as abundant in this part of the world as in Jamaica.

Looking up towards the town, which we at this time faced, the marsh is upon your right, and the river upon your left. Close to the latter runs the main road, following the course of the stream all the way to New Orleans. Between the road and the water, is thrown up a lofty and strong embankment, resembling the dykes in Holland, and meant to serve a similar purpose; by means of which, the Mississippi is prevented from overflowing its banks, and the entire flat is preserved from inundation. But the attention of a stranger is irresistibly drawn away from every other object, to contemplate the magnificence of this noble river. Pouring along at the prodigious rate of four miles an hour, an immense body of water is spread out

before you; measuring a full mile across, and nearly a hundred fathoms in depth. What this mighty stream must be near its mouth, I can hardly imagine, for we were here upwards of a hundred miles from the ocean.

Such was the general aspect of the country which we had entered; our own position, again, was this. The three regiments turning off from the road into one extensive green field, formed three close columns within pistol-shot of the river. Upon our right, but so much in advance as to be of no service to us, was a large house, surrounded by about twenty wooden huts, probably intended for the accommodation of slaves. Towards this house, there was a slight rise in the ground, and between it and the camp was a small pond of no great depth. As far to the rear again as the first was to the front, stood another house, inferior in point of appearance, and skirted by no out-buildings: this was also upon the right; and here General Keane, who accompanied us, fixed his head-quarters; but neither the one nor the other could be employed as a covering redoubt, the flank of the division extending, as it were, between them. Immediately in front, where the advanced posts were stationed, ran a dry ditch and a row of lofty palings; and thus, both it and the left were in some degree protected;

while the right and rear were wholly without cover. Though we occupied this field, therefore, and might have looked well in a peaceable district, it must be confessed that our situation hardly deserved the title of a military position.

LETTER XX.

Noon had just passed, when the word was given to halt, and therefore every opportunity was afforded of posting the piquets with leisure and attention. Nor was this deemed enough to secure tranquillity; several parties were sent out in all directions to reconnoitre, who returned with an account that no enemy nor any trace of an enemy could be discerned. The troops were accordingly suffered to light fires, and to make themselves comfortable; only their accoutrements were not taken off, and the arms were piled in such form as to be within reach at a moment's notice.

As soon as these agreeable orders were issued, the soldiers proceeded to obey them both in letter and in spirit. Tearing up a number of strong palings, large fires were lighted in a moment; water was brought from the river, and provisions were cooked. But their bare rations did not content them. Spreading themselves over the country as far as a regard to safety would permit, they entered every house, and brought away quantities of hams, fowls, and wines of various descriptions; which being divided among them, all fared well,

and none received too large a quantity. In this division of good things, they were not unmindful of their officers; for upon active warfare the officers are considered by the privates as comrades, to whom respect and obedience are due, rather than as masters.

It was now about three o'clock in the afternoon, and all had as yet remained quiet. The troops having finished their meal, lay stretched beside their fires, or refreshed themselevs by bathing, for to-day the heat was such as to render this latter employment extremely agreeable, when suddenly a bugle from the advanced posts sounded the alarm, which was echoed back from all in the army. Starting up, we stood to our arms, and prepared for battle, the alarm being now succeeded by some firing; but we were scarcely in order, when word was sent from the front that there was no danger, only a few horse having made their appearance, who were checked and put to flight at the first discharge. Upon this intelligence, our wonted confidence returned, and we again betook ourselves to our former occupations, remarking that, as the Americans had never yet dared to attack, there was no great probability of their doing so on the present occasion.

In this manner the day passed without any farther alarm; and darkness having set in, the fires were made to blaze with increased splendour, our

evening meal was eat, and we prepared to sleep. But about half-past seven o'clock, the attention of several individuals was drawn to a large vessel, which seemed to be stealing up the river till she came opposite to our camp; when her anchor was dropped, and her sails leisurely furled. At first we were doubtful whether she might not be one of our own cruisers which had passed the fort unobserved, and had arrived to render her assistance in our future operations. To satisfy this doubt, she was repeatedly hailed, but returned no answer; when an alarm spreading through the bivouac, all thought of sleep was laid aside. Several musket shots were now fired at her with the design of exacting a reply, of which no notice was taken; till at length having fastened all her sails, and swung her broad-side towards us, we could distinctly hear some one cry out in a commanding voice, 'Give them this for the honour of America.' The words were instantly followed by the flashes of her guns, and a deadly shower of grape swept down numbers in the camp.

Against this dreadful fire we had nothing whatever to oppose. The artillery which we had landed was too light to bring into competition with an adversary so powerful; and as she had anchored within a short distance of the opposite bank, no musketry could reach her with any precision or effect. A few rockets were discharged, which

made a beautiful appearance in the air; but the rocket is an uncertain weapon, and these deviated too far from their object to produce even terror among those against whom they were directed. Under these circumstances, as nothing could be done offensively, our sole object was to shelter the men as much as possible from this iron hail. With this view, they were commanded to leave the fires, and to hasten under the dyke. Thither all, accordingly, repaired, without much regard to order and regularity, and laying ourselves along wherever we could find room, we listened in painful silence to the pattering of grape shot among our huts, and to the shrieks and groans of those who lay wounded beside them.

The night was now as dark as pitch, the moon being but young, and totally obscured with clouds. Our fires deserted by us, and beat about by the enemy's shot, began to burn red and dull, and, except when the flashes of those guns which played upon us cast a momentary glare, not an object could be distinguished at the distance of a yard. In this state we lay for nearly, an hour, unable to move from our ground, or offer any opposition to those who kept us there; when a straggling fire of musketry called our attention towards the piquets, and warned us to prepare for a closer and more desperate strife. As yet, however, it was uncertain from what cause this dropping fire arose.

It might proceed from the sentinels, who, alarmed by the cannonade from the river, mistook every tree for an American; and till this should be more fully ascertained, it would be improper to expose the troops, by moving any of them from the shelter which the bank afforded. But these doubts were not permitted to continue long in existence. The dropping fire having paused for a few moments, was succeeded by a fearful yell; and the heavens were illuminated on all sides by a semi-circular blaze of musketry. It was now clear that we were surrounded, and that by a very superior force; and, therefore, no alternative remaining, but, either to surrender at discretion, or to beat back the assailants.

The first of these plans was never for an instant thought of; and the second was immediately put into force. Rushing from under the bank, the 85th and 95th flew to support the piquets, while the 4th, stealing to the rear of the encampment, formed close column, and remained as a reserve. But to describe this action is altogether out of the question, for it was such a battle as the annals of modern warfare can hardly match. All order, all discipline, were lost. Each officer, as he was able to collect twenty or thirty men round him, advanced into the middle of the enemy, when it was fought hand to hand, bayonet to bayonet, and

sword to sword, with the tumult and ferocity of one of Homer's combats.

To give some idea of this extraordinary combat, I shall detail the adventures of a friend of mine, who chanced to accompany one of the first parties sent out. Dashing through the bivouac under an heavy discharge from the vessel, his party reached the lake, which was forded, and advanced as far as the house where General Keane had fixed his head quarters. The moon had by this time made her way through the clouds ; and though only in her first quarter gave light enough to permit their seeing, though not distinctly. Having now gone far enough to the right, the party pushed on towards the front, and entered a sloping field of stubble; at the upper end of which they could distinguish a dark line of men; but, whether they were friends or foes it was impossible to determine. Unwilling to fire, lest he should kill any of our own people, my friend led on the volunteers whom he had got round him, till they reached some thick piles of reeds, about twenty yards from the object of their notice. Here they were saluted by a sharp volley, and being now confident that they were enemies, he commanded his men to fire. But a brother officer who accompanied him, was not so convinced, assuring him that they were soldiers of the 95th, upon which they agreed to divide the forces ; that he who doubted, should remain with

one part, where he was, while my friend, with the rest, should go round upon the flank of this line, and discover certainly to which army it belonged.

Taking with him about fourteen men, he accordingly moved off to the right, when falling in with some other stragglers, he attached them likewise to his party, and advanced. Springing over a high rail, they came down upon the left of those concerning whom the doubt had existed, and found them to be, as my friend had supposed, Americans. Not a moment was lost in attacking, but having got unperceived, within a few feet of where they stood, they discharged their pieces, and rushed on to the charge. In the whole course of my military career, I do not recollect any scene at all resembling that which followed. Some soldiers having lost their bayonets, laid about them with the butt end of their firelocks; while many a sword, which till to night had not drank blood, became in a few minutes crimsoned enough.

The contest, though desperate, was of short duration. Panic struck at the vigour of the assault, the Americans soon fled, and our people pursued them through a garden, and into the middle of the huts, which I have stated as surrounding a large house upon the right front of our original position. Here they found a considerable number of our own men, and one or two officers taken, and guarded by a detachment of Americans. These they imme-

diately released, who, catching up what weapons they could find, followed their liberators in the chase of the flying enemy.

But, having now got as far in advance of the main body as he considered prudent, my friend determined to pause here, till he should discover how things went in other parts of the field.

With this view he halted his party, amounting, by the late addition, to forty men and two officers; and proceeding alone towards the front, he descried another line, of the length of one strong battalion, at the bottom of a field on the left. Being anxious to discover who they were, he walked forward, when a voice from among them called out not to fire, because they were Americans. But my friend had more in view than merely to discover what countrymen they were, and therefore, answering as one of themselves, he demanded to what corps they belonged? To this the speaker replied, that they were the 2d battalion of the 1st Regiment, and requested to be informed what had become of the 1st battalion. Still imitating the American twang, my friend again made answer that it was upon his right; and assuming a tone of authority, commanded them to remain as they were, till he should join them with a party of which he was at the head.

Having ended this conversation, he returned to the village, and forming his party in line, led them

on in deep silence towards the 2d battalion of the 1st Regiment. As they drew near he called out for the commanding officer, or him who had spoken, to come forward, adding that he had something to communicate; upon which an elderly man, armed with a huge dragoon sabre, advanced to meet him. As soon as they were together, my friend seized his sword, and desired him to surrender, declaring that he and his regiment were surrounded, and that resistance would only occasion unnecessary bloodshed. The man was completely confounded, and resigned his sword immediately; when, turning to another officer he demanded his. This person, however, was younger, and appeared to have his wits more about him, for instead of giving up his weapon, he made a cut at my friend's head, which he had scarcely time to ward of. Their countrymen, likewise, who had hitherto stood motionless, took courage at the deed, and began firing; when, as all chance of cheating them into a surrender was at an end, our soldiers dashed amongst them, and once more renewed the combat hand in hand.

But though the enemy had so far recovered from their panic as to refuse a surrender, their resolution did not prompt them to any determined resistance. Charged as they were upon the flank, it is not wonderful that they soon fell into confusion, and being closely pressed by the brave little party, they had no time given to rally. In less than an

hour, therefore, they began to fly; and as my friend considered that he had been rash enough in attacking a force so superior, with a handful of men, he did not add to that rashness, by continuing the pursuit too far; but having chased them a little way, recalled his followers, and returned to the hamlet.

In giving a detail so minute of the adventures of an individual, on the present occasion, I am far from wishing to exhibit him in the light of an hero of romance. The fact is, that what he did, was done in a greater or less degree by every officer in the army; for this was a combat which compelled every man, in spite of himself, to rely solely on his own resources. Attacked unexpectedly, and in the dark, surrounded by enemies before any arrangements could be made to oppose them, it is not conceivable that order, or the rules of disciplined war could be preserved. We were mingled with the Americans, frequently before we could tell whether they were friends or foes; because speaking the same language with ourselves, there was no mark by which to distinguish them, at least none whose influence extended beyond the distance of a few paces. The consequence was, that more feats of individual gallantry were performed in the course of this night, than many campaigns might have afforded an opporrunity of performing; while viewing the affair as a regular action, none

can be imagined more full of blunders and confusion. No man could tell what was going forward in any quarter, except where he himself chanced immediately to stand; no one part of the line could bring assistance to another, because, in truth, no line existed. It was in one word a perfect tumult, resembling, except in its fatal consequences, those scenes which the night of an Irish fair usually exhibits, much more than an engagement between two civilised armies.

The night was far spent, and the sound of fighting had begun to die away, when my friend once more established himself among the huts. Here, likewise, considerable numbers of our people assembled, from whom he learned that the enemy were repulsed on all sides. The combat had been long and obstinately contested, having begun at eight in the evening, and continuing till three in the morning, but the victory was decidedly ours; for the Americans retreated in the greatest disorder, leaving us in possession of the field. Our loss, however, was enormous. Not less than 500 men had fallen, many of whom were our finest soldiers and best officers, and yet we could not but consider ourselves fortunate in escaping from the toils, even at the expense of so great a sacrifice.

The recal being sounded, our troops were soon brought together, and filing to the left, formed line in front of the ground, where we had at first

encamped. Here we remained ready for whatever might occur till morn, when, to avoid the fire of the vessel, we again betook ourselves to the bank, and lay down. For some hours past, indeed, she had ceased to annoy us, but this we knew was owing merely to the ignorance of her crew, where to direct her aim; and we were well aware that, unless we contrived to cover ourselves before that ignorance was removed, we should undoubtedly suffer for our temerity.

Day-light was beginning to appear, and we were just able to distinguish that our enemy was a fine schooner, pierced for eighteen guns, and crowded with men, when we retreated to the bank. Here we lay for some hours worn out with fatigue and want of sleep, and shivering in the cold air of a frosty morning, without being able to light a fire, or prepare a morsel of provisions. Whenever an attempt of the kind was made; as soon as two or three men began to steal from shelter, the schooner's guns immediately opened; and thus was the whole division kept, as it were, prisoners, for the space of an entire day.

While our troops lay in this uncomfortable situation, I stole away with two or three men to find out and bury a friend who was among the slain. In wandering over the field for this purpose, the most shocking and disgusting sights every where presented themselves. I have frequently beheld

a greater number of dead bodies in as small a compass, though these, indeed, were numerous enough, but wounds more disfiguring or more horrible, I certainly never witnessed. A man, shot through the head or heart, lies as if he were in a deep slumber; insomuch, that when you gaze upon him, you experience little else than pity. But of these many had met their death from bayonet wounds, sabre cuts, or heavy blows from the butt ends of muskets; and the consequence was, that not only were the wounds themselves exceedingly frightful, but the very countenances of the dead exhibited the most savage and ghastly expressions. Friends and foes lay together in small groups of four or six, nor was it difficult to tell almost the very hand by which some of them had fallen. Nay, such had been the deadly closeness of the strife, that in one or two places, an English and American soldier might be seen with the bayonet of each fastened in the other's body.

Having searched for some time in vain, I at length discovered my friend lying behind a bundle of reeds, where, during the action, we had separated; and shot through the temples by a rifle bullet so remarkably small, as scarcely to leave any trace of its progress. I am well aware that this is no fit place to introduce the working of my own personal feelings, but he was my friend, and such a friend as few men are happy enough to

possess. We had known and loved each other for years; our regard had been cemented by a long participation in the same hardships and dangers; and it cannot therefore surprise, if even now I pay that tribute to his worth and our friendship, which, however unavailing it may be, they both deserve.

When in the act of looking for him, I had flattered myself, that I should be able to bear his loss with something like philosophy, but when I beheld him pale and bloody, I found all my resolution evaporate. I threw myself on the ground beside him, and wept like a child. But this was no time for the indulgence of useless sorrow. Like the royal bard, I knew that I should go to him, but he could not return to me, and I could not tell whether an hour would pass before my summons would arrive Lifting him, therefore, upon a cart, I had him carried down to head-quarter house, now converted into an hospital, and having dug for him a grave at the bottom of the garden, I laid him there as a soldier should be laid, arrayed, not in a shroud, but in his uniform. Even the very privates, whom I brought with me to assist at his funeral, mingled their tears with mine, nor are many so fortunate as to return to the parent dust more deeply or more sincerely lamented.

Retiring from the performance of this melancholy duty, I strolled into the hospital, and visited the

wounded. It is here that war loses its grandeur and show, and presents only a real picture of its effects. Every room in the house was crowded with wretches mangled, and apparently in the most excruciating agonies. Prayers, groans, and I grieve to add, the most horrid exclamations, smote upon the ear wherever I turned. Some lay at length upon straw, with eyes half closed, and limbs motionless; some endeavoured to start up, shrieking with pain; while the wandering eye and incoherent speech of others, indicated the loss of reason, and usually foretold the approach of death. But there was one among the rest, whose appearance was too horrible ever to be forgotten. He had been shot through the wind-pipe, and the breath making its way between the skin and the flesh, had dilated him to a size absolutely terrific. His head and face were particularly shocking. Every feature was enlarged beyond what can well be imagined; while his eyes were so completely hidden by the cheeks and forehead, as to destroy all resemblance to an human countenance.

Passing through the apartments where the private soldiers lay, I next came to those occupied by officers. Of these there were five or six in one small room, to whom little better accommodation could be provided than to their inferiors. It was a sight peculiarly distressing, because all of them chanced to be personal acquaintances of my own.

One had been shot in the head, and lay gasping and insensible; another had received a musket ball in the belly, which had pierced through and lodged in the back bone. The former appeared to suffer but little, giving no signs of life, except what an heavy breathing produced; the latter was in the most dreadful agony, screaming out, and gnawing the covering under which he lay. There were many besides these, some severely, and others slightly hurt; but as I have already dwelt at sufficient length upon a painful subject, I shall only observe, that to all was afforded every assistance which circumstances would allow; and that the exertions of their medical attendants were such, as deserved and obtained the grateful thanks of even the most afflicted among the sufferers themselves.

LETTER XXI.

In the mean time the rest of the troops were landing as fast as possible, and hastening to join their comrades. Though the advance had set out from Pine Island by themselves, they did not occupy all the boats in the fleet. Part of the second brigade, therefore, had embarked about twelve hours after their departure; and rowing leisurely on, were considerably more than half way across the lakes when the action began. In the stillness of night, however, it is astonishing at what distance a noise is heard. Though they must have been at least twenty miles from the Bayou when the schooner first opened, the sound of firing reached them, and roused the rowers from their indolence. Pulling with all their might, they now hurried on, while the most profound silence reigned among the troops, and gaining the creek in little more than three hours, sent fresh reinforcements to share in the danger and glory of the night.

Nor was a moment lost by the sailors in returning to the island. Intelligence of the combat spread like wild-fire; the boats were loaded even beyond what was strictly safe, and thus by exert-

ing themselves in a degree almost unparalleled, our gallant seamen succeeded in bringing the whole army into position before dark on the 24th. The second and third brigades, therefore, now took up their ground upon the spot where the late battle was fought, and resting their right upon the woody morass, extended so far towards the river, as that the advance by wheeling up might continue the line across the entire plain.

But instead of taking part in this formation, the advance was still fettered to the bank, from which it was additionally prevented from moving by the arrival of another large ship, which cast anchor about a mile above the schooner. Thus were three battalions kept stationary by the guns of these two formidable floating batteries, and it was clear that no attempt to extricate them could be made without great loss, unless under cover of night. During the whole of the 24th, therefore, they remained in this uncomfortable situation; but as soon as darkness had well set in, a change of position was effected. Withdrawing the troops, company by company, from behind the bank, General Keane stationed them in the village of huts; by which means the high road was abandoned to the protection of a piquet, and the left of the army covered by a large chateau.

Being now placed beyond risk of serious annoyance from the shipping, the whole army re-

mained quiet for the night. How long we were to continue in this state, nobody appeared to know; not a whisper was circulated as to the time of advancing, nor a surmise ventured respecting the next step likely to be taken. In our guides, to whose rumours we had before listened with avidity, no farther confidence was reposed. It was perfectly evident, either that they had purposely deceived us, or that their information was gathered from a most imperfect source; therefore, though they were not exactly placed in confinement, they were strictly watched, and treated more like spies than deserters. Instead of an easy conquest, we had already met with vigorous opposition; instead of finding the inhabitants ready and eager to join us, we found the houses deserted, the cattle and horses driven away, and every appearance of hostility. To march by the only road was rendered impracticable, so completely was it commanded by the shipping. In a word, all things had turned out diametrically opposite to what had been anticipated; and it appeared, that instead of a trifling affair, more likely to fill our pockets, than to add to our renown, we had embarked in an undertaking which presented difficulties not to be surmounted, without patience and determination.

Having effected this change of position, and covered the front of his army with a strong chain of outposts, General Keane, as I have said, remained

quiet during the remainder of the night, and on the morrow was relieved from farther care and responsibility by the unexpected arrival of Sir Edward Pakenham, and General Gibbs. As soon as the death of Ross was known in London, the former of these officers was dispatched to take upon himself the command of the army. Sailing immediately with the latter, as his second in command, he had been favoured, during the whole voyage, by a fresh and fair wind, and now arrived in time to see his troops brought into a situation from which all his abilities could scarcely expect to extricate them. Nor were the troops themselves ignorant of the unfavourable circumstances in which they stood. Hoping every thing, therefore, from a change, they greeted their new leader with an hearty cheer; while the confidence which past events had tended in some degree to dispel, returned once more to the bosoms of all. It was Christmas Day, and a number of officers clubbing their little stock of provisions, resolved to dine together in memory of former times. But at so melancholy a Christmas dinner I do not recollect at any time, to have been present. We dined in a barn; of plates, knives and forks there was a dismal scarcity, nor could our fare boast of much either in intrinsic good quality, or in the way of cooking. These, however, were mere matters of merriment: it was the want of many well known and

beloved faces that gave us pain; nor were any other subjects discussed, besides the amiable qualities of those who no longer formed part of our mess, and never would again form part of it. A few guesses as to the probable success of future attempts alone relieved this topic, and now and then a shot from the schooner drew our attention to ourselves; for though too far removed from the river to be in much danger, we were still within cannon shot of our enemy. Nor was she inactive in her attempts to molest. Elevating her guns to a great degree, she contrived occasionally to strike the wall of the building within which we sat; but the force of the ball was too far spent to penetrate, and could therefore produce no serious alarm.

While we were thus sitting at table, a loud shriek was heard, after one of these explosions, and on running out, we found that a shot had taken effect in the body of an unfortunate soldier. I mention this incident, because I never beheld in any human being so great a tenacity of life. Though fairly cut in two at the lower part of the belly, the poor wretch lived for nearly an hour, gasping for breath, and giving signs even of pain.

But to return to my narrative: as soon as he reached the camp, Sir Edward proceeded to examine, with a soldier's eye, every point and place within view. Of the American army nothing whatever could be perceived, except a corps of ob-

servation, composed of five or six hundred mounted riflemen, which hovered along our front, and watched our motions. The town itself was completely hid, nor was it possible to see beyond the distance of a very few miles, either in front or rear, so flat and unbroken was the face of the country. Under these circumstances, little insight into the state of affairs could be obtained by reconnoitring The only thing, indeed, which he could learn from it was, that while the vessels kept their present station upon the river, no advance could be made; and, as he felt that every moment's delay was injurious to us, and favourable to the enemy, he resolved to remove these incumbrances, and to push forward as soon as possible.

With this view nine field-pieces, two howitzers, and one mortar were brought down to the brink of the stream, as soon as it was dark. Working parties were likewise ordered out, by whom a battery was thrown up opposite to the schooner; and having got all things in readiness, at dawn on the 26th a heavy cannonade was opened upon her with red-hot shot. It was not long before we could perceive her crew hastening into their boats, while the smoke, which began to rise from her decks, proved that the balls had taken effect. She was, in fact, on fire, and being abandoned without resistance in little more than an hour, she blew up. In itself the sight was a fine one, but to us it

was peculiarly gratifying, for we could not but experience something like satiated revenge at the destruction of a vessel from which we had suffered so much damage. A loud shout accordingly followed the explosion, and the guns were immediately turned against the ship. But the fate of her companion had warned her not to remain till she herself should be attacked. Setting every inch of canvas, and hoisting out her boats, she began to stem the stream at the very instant the schooner took fire, and being impelled forward both by towing and sailing, she succeeded in getting beyond the range of shot before the guns could be brought to bear. One shell, however, was thrown with admirable precision, which falling upon her deck, caused considerable execution: but, excepting this, she escaped without injury, and did not anchor again till she had got too far for pursuit.

Having thus removed all apparent obstacles to his future progress, the General made dispositions for a speedy advance. Dividing the army into two columns, he appointed General Gibbs to the command of one, and General Keane to the command of the other. The left column, led on by the latter officer, consisted of the 95th, the 85th, the 93d, and one black corps; the right, of the 4th, 21st, 44th, and the other black corps. The artillery, of which we had now ten pieces in the field, though at present attached to the left column, was designed

to act as circumstances and the nature of the ground would permit; while the dragoons, few of whom had as yet provided themselves with horses, were appointed to guard the hospitals, and to secure the wounded from any sudden surprise or molestation from the rear.

But the day was too far spent in making these arrangements, and in clearing the way for future operations, to permit any movement before the morrow. The whole of the 26th was therefore spent in bringing up stores, ammunition, and a few heavy guns from the ships, which being placed in battery upon the banks of the river, secured us against the return of our floating adversary. All this was done quietly enough, nor was there any cause of alarm till after sun-set; but from that time till towards dawn, we were kept in a constant state of anxiety and agitation. Sending down small bodies of riflemen, the American General harassed our piquets, killed and wounded a few of the sentinels, and prevented the main body from obtaining any sound or refreshing sleep. Scarcely had the troops lain down, when they were roused by a sharp firing at the outposts, which lasted only till they were in order, and then ceased; but as soon as they had dispersed, and had once more addressed themselves to repose, the same cause of alarm returned, and they were again called to their ranks. Thus was the entire night spent in watch-

ing, or at best in broken and disturbed slumbers, than which nothing is more trying, both to the health and spirits of an army.

With the piquets, again, it fared even worse. For the out-posts of an army to sleep is at all times considered as a thing impossible; but in modern and civilised warfare they are nevertheless looked upon, in some degree, as sacred. Thus, while two European armies remain inactively facing each other, the out-posts of neither are molested, unless a direct attack upon the main body be intended; nay, so far is this tacit good understanding carried, that I have myself beheld French and English sentinels not more than twenty yards apart. But the Americans entertained no such chivalric notions. An enemy was to them an enemy, whether alone, or in the midst of five thousand companions; and they therefore counted the death of every individual as so much taken from the strength of the whole. In point of fact, they no doubt reasoned correctly, but to us at least it appeared an ungenerous return to barbarity. Whenever they could approach unperceived within proper distance of our watch fires, six or eight riflemen would fire amongst the party that sat round them, while one or two, stealing as close to each sentinel as a regard to their own safety would permit, acted the part of assassins rather than of soldiers, and attempted to murder them in cold blood. For the officers, like-

wise, when going their rounds, they constantly lay in wait; and thus, by a continued dropping fire, they not only wounded some of those against whom their aim was directed, but occasioned considerable anxiety and uneasiness throughout the whole line.

Having continued this detestable system of warfare till towards morning, they retired, and left us at rest. But as soon as day began to break, our piquets were called in, and the troops formed in order of attack. The right column, under General Gibbs, took post near the skirts of the morass, throwing out skirmishers half way across the plain, while the left column drew up upon the road, covered by the rifle corps, which in extended order met the skirmishers from the other. With this last divison went the artillery, already well supplied with horses; and, at the signal given, the whole moved forward.

It was a clear frosty morning, the mists had dispersed, and the sun shone brightly upon our arms when we began our march. The enemy's corps of observation fell back as we advanced, without offering in any way to impede our progress, and it was impossible to guess, ignorant as we were of the position of his main body, at what moment opposition might be expected. Nor, in truth, was it matter of much anxiety. Our spirits, in spite of the troubles of the night, were good, and our ex-

pectations of success were high, consequently many rude jests were bandied about, and many careless words spoken. For soldiers are, of all classes of men, the freest from care, and on that account, perhaps, the most happy. By being continually exposed to it, danger with them ceases to be frightful; of death, they have no more terror than the beasts that perish, and even hardships, such as cold, wet, hunger, and broken rest, lose at least part of their disagreeableness, by the frequency of their recurrence.

Moving on in this merry mood, we advanced about four or five miles without the smallest check or hindrance; when, at length, we found ourselves in view of the enemy's army, posted in a very advantageous manner. About forty yards in their front was a canal, which extended from the morass to within a short distance of the high road. Along their line were thrown up breast-works, not indeed completed, but even now formidable. Upon the road, and at several other points were erected powerful batteries; while the ship, with a large flotilla of gun-boats, flanked the whole position from the river.

When I say that we came in sight of the enemy, I do not mean that he was gradually exposed to us in such a manner, as to leave time for cool examination and reflection. On the right, indeed, he was seen for some time, but on the left, a few

houses built at a turning in the road, entirely concealed him; nor was it till they had gained that turning, and beheld the muzzles of his guns pointed towards them, that those who moved in this direction were aware of their proximity to danger. But that danger was indeed near, they were quickly taught; for scarcely had the head of the column passed the houses, when a deadly fire was opened from both the battery and the shipping. That the Americans are excellent shots, as well with artillery as with rifles, we have had frequent cause to acknowledge; but, perhaps, on no occasion did they assert their claim to the title of good artillery-men more effectually than on the present. Scarce a bullet passed over, or fell short of its mark, but all striking full into the midst of our ranks, occasioned terrible havoc. The shrieks of the wounded, therefore, the crash of firelocks, and the fall of such as were killed, caused at first some little confusion; and what added to the panic, was, that from the houses beside which we stood, bright flames suddently burst out. The Americans expecting this attack, had filled them with combustibles for the purpose; and directing one or two guns against them, loaded with red-hot shot, in an instant set them on fire. The scene was altogether very sublime. A tremendous cannonade mowed down our ranks, and deafened us with its roar; while

two large chateaux and their out-buildings, almost scorched us with the flames, and blinded us with the smoke which they emitted.

The infantry, however, was not long suffered to remain thus exposed; but, being ordered to quit the path, and to form line in the fields, the artillery was brought up, and opposed to that of the enemy. But the contest was in every respect unequal, since their artillery far exceeded ours, both in numerical strength and weight of metal. The consequence was, that in half an hour, two of our field-pieces, and one field-mortar, were dismounted; many of the gunners were killed; and the rest, after an ineffectual attempt to silence the fire of the shipping, were obliged to retire.

In the mean time, the infantry having formed line, advanced under a heavy discharge of round and grape shot, till they were checked by the appearance of the canal. Of its depth, they were of course ignorant, and to attempt its passage without having ascertained whether it could be forded, might have been productive of fatal consequences. A halt was therefore ordered, and the men were commanded to shelter themselves as well as they could from the enemy's fire. For this purpose, they were hurried into a wet ditch, of sufficient depth to cover the knees, where, leaning forward, they concealed themselves behind some high

rushes which grew upon its brink, and thus escaped many bullets which fell round them in all directions.

Thus fared it with the left of the army, while the right, though less exposed to the cannonade, was not more successful in its object. The same impediment which checked one column, forced the other likewse to pause; and after having driven in an advanced body of the enemy, and endeavoured, without effect, to penetrate through the marsh, it also was commanded to halt. In a word, all thought of attacking was for this day abandoned; and it now only remained to withdraw the troops from their present perilous situation, with as little loss as possible.

The first thing to be done was to remove the dismounted guns. Upon this enterprize, a party of seamen was employed, who, running forward to the spot where they lay, lifted them, in spite of the whole of the enemy's fire, and bore them off in triumph. As soon as this was effected, regiment after regiment stole away; not in a body, but one by one, under the same discharge which saluted their approach. But a retreat, thus conducted, necessarily occupied much time. Noon had therefore long past, before the last corps was brought off; and when we again began to muster, twilight was approaching. We did not, however, retire to our former position; but, having fallen back only

about two miles from the canal, where it was supposed that we should be beyond reach of annoyance from the American artillery, we there established ourselves for the night, having suffered less during the day than, from our exposed situation, and the enemy's heavy fire, might have been expected.

The ground which we now occupied resembled, in almost every particular, what we had quitted. We again extended across the plain, from the marsh to the river; no wood, or cover of any description concealing our line, or obstructing the view of either army; while, both in front and rear, was an open space, laid out in fields, and intersected by narrow ditches. Our outposts, however, were pushed forward to some houses within a few hundred yards of the enemy's works, sending out advanced sentinels even farther; and the head-quarters of the army were established near the spot where the action of the 23d had been fought.

In this situation we remained inactive during the 28th, 29th, and 30th; but not so the enemy. Day and night we could observe numerous parties employed in strengthening his lines; while from the increased number of tents, which almost every hour might be discerned, it was evident that strong reinforcements were continually pouring into his camp. Nor did he leave us totally unmolested. By giving to his guns a great degree of elevation, he contrived at last to reach our bivouac; and thus

were we constantly under a cannonade which, though it did little execution, proved nevertheless extremely annoying. Besides this, he now began to erect batteries on the opposite bank of the river; from which a flanking fire could be thrown across the entire front of his position. In short, he adopted every precaution which prudence could suggest, and for the reception of which, the nature of his post was so admirably adapted.

Under these circumstances, it was evident that the longer an attack was delayed, the less likely was it to succeed; that something must be done immediately every one perceived, but how to proceed, was the difficulty. If we attempted to storm the American lines, we should expose ourselves to almost certain destruction from their artillery; to turn them, seemed to be impossible; and to draw their troops by any manœuvring from behind their entrenchments, was a thing altogether out of the question. There seemed, therefore, to be but one practicable mode of assault; which was, to treat these field-works as one would treat a regular fortification; by erecting breaching batteries against them, and silencing, if it were possible, at least some of their guns. To this plan, therefore, did our leader resort; and, in consequence, the whole of these three days were employed in landing heavy cannon, bringing up ammunition, and making such preparations as might have sufficed for a siege.

At length, having completed his arrangements, and provided such means as were considered sufficient to ensure success, General Pakenham determined to commence operations without delay. One half of the army was accordingly ordered out on the night of the 31st, and marched to the front, passing the piquets, and halting about three hundred yards from the enemy's line. Here it was resolved to throw up a chain of works; and here the greater part of this detachment, laying down their firelocks, applied themselves vigorously to their tasks, while the rest stood armed and prepared for their defence.

The night was dark, and our people maintained a profound silence; by which means, not an idea of what was going on existed in the American camp. Labouring, therefore, with all diligence, six batteries were completed long before dawn, in which were mounted thirty pieces of heavy cannon; when, falling back a little way, this force united itself to the remainder of the infantry, and lay down behind some rushes, in readiness to act, as soon as it should be wanted.

In the erection of these batteries, a circumstance occurred worthy of notice, on account of its singularity. I have already stated, that the whole of this district was covered with the stubble of sugar-cane; and I might have added, that every store-house and barn, attached to the different mansions scattered over it, was filled with barrels of sugar.

In throwing up these works, the sugar was used instead of earth. Rolling the hogsheads towards the front, they were placed upright in the parapets of the batteries; and it was computed, that sugar to the value of many thousand pounds sterling was thus disposed of.

LETTER XXII.

The infantry having retired, and the gunners taken their station, dawn was anxiously expected. But the morning of the 1st of January chanced to be peculiarly gloomy. A thick haze obscured for a long time the rays of the sun, nor could objects be discerned with any accuracy till a late hour.

But, at length, the mist gave way, and the American camp was fully exposed to view. Being at this time only three hundred yards distant, we could perceive all that was going forward with great exactness. The different regiments were upon parade; and being dressed in holiday suits, presented really a fine appearance. Mounted officers were riding backwards and forwards through the ranks, bands were playing, and colours floating in the air; in a word, all seemed jollity and gala; when suddenly our batteries opened, and the face of affairs was instantly changed. The ranks were broken; the different corps dispersing, fled in all directions, while the utmost terror and disorder appeared to prevail. Instead of nicely dressed lines, nothing but confused crowds could now be

observed; nor was it without much difficulty that order was finally restored.

While this consternation prevailed among the infantry, their artillery remained silent; but as soon as the former rallied, they also recovered confidence, and answered our salute with great rapidity and precision. A heavy cannonade therefore commenced on both sides, and continued during the whole of the day; till, towards evening, our ammunition began to fail, and our fire in consequence to slacken. The fire of the Americans, on the other hand, was redoubled: landing a number of guns from the flotilla, they increased their artillery to a prodigious amount; and directing, at the same time, the whole force of their cannon on the opposite bank, against the flank of our batteries, they soon convinced us, that all endeavours to surpass them in this mode of fighting, would be useless. Once more, therefore, were we obliged to retire, leaving our heavy guns to their fate; but as no attempt was made by the Americans to secure them, working parties were again sent out after dark, and such as had not been destroyed, were removed.

Of the fatigue undergone during these operations by the whole army, from the General down to the meanest sentinel, it would be difficult to form an adequate conception. For two whole nights and days, not a man had closed an eye,

except such as were cool enough to sleep amidst showers of cannon-ball; and during the day, scarcely a moment had been allowed, in which we were able so much as to break our fast. We retired, therefore, not only baffled and disappointed, but in some degree disheartened and discontented. All our plans had as yet proved abortive; even this, upon which so much reliance had been placed, was found to be of no avail; and it must be confessed, that something like murmuring began to be heard through the camp. And, in truth, if ever an army might be permitted to murmur, it was this. In landing, they had borne great hardships, not only without repining, but with cheerfulness; their hopes had been excited by false reports, as to the practicability of the attempt in which they were embarked; and now they found themselves entangled amidst difficulties from which there appeared to be no escape, except by victory. In their attempts upon the enemy's line, however, they had been twice foiled; in artillery, they perceived themselves so greatly overmatched, that there own could hardly assist them; their provisions being derived wholly from the fleet, were both scanty and coarse; and their rest was continually broken. For not only did the cannon and mortars from the main of the enemy's position play unremittingly upon them both day and night; but they were likewise exposed to a deadly fire

from the opposite bank of the river, where no less than eighteen pieces of artillery were now mounted, and swept the entire line of our encampment. Besides all this, to undertake the duty of a piquet, was as dangerous as to go into action. Parties of American sharp-shooters harassed and disturbed those appointed to that service, from the time they took possession of their post, till they were relieved; while to light fires at night, was impossible, because they served but as certain marks for the enemy's gunners. I repeat, therefore, that a little murmuring could not be wondered at. Be it observed, however, that these were not the murmurs of men anxious to escape from a disagreeable situation by any means. On the contrary, they resembled rather the growling of a chained dog, when he sees his adversary, and cannot reach him; for in all their complaints, no man ever hinted at a retreat, while all were eager to bring matters to the issue of a battle, at any sacrifice of lives.

Nor was our gallant leader less anxious to fight than his followers. To fight upon something like equal terms, however, was his wish; and for this purpose, a new scheme was invented, worthy, for its boldness, of the school in which Sir Edward had studied his profession. It was determined to divide the army, to send part across the river, who should seize the enemy's guns, and turn them on themselves; while the remainder should at the

same time make a general assault along the whole entrenchment. But before this plan could be put into execution, it would be necessary to cut a canal across the entire neck of land from the Bayo de Catiline to the river, of sufficient width and depth to admit of boats being brought up from the lake. Upon this arduous undertaking were the troops immediately employed. Being divided into four companies, they laboured by turns, day and night; one party relieving another after a stated number of hours, in such order as that the work should never be entirely deserted. The fatigue undergone during the prosecution of this attempt, no words can sufficiently describe; yet it was pursued without repining, and at length, by unremitted exertions, they succeeded in effecting their purpose by the 6th of January.

While these things were going on, and men's minds were anxiously turned towards approaching events, fresh spirit was given to the army by the unexpected arrival of Major General Lambert, with the 7th and 43d; two fine battalions, mustering each eight hundred effective men. By this reinforcement, together with the addition of a body of sailors and marines from the fleet, our numbers amounted now to little short of eight thousand men; a force which, in almost any other quarter of America, would have been irresistible. Of the numbers of the enemy, again, various reports were in circula-

tion; some stating them at 23, and others at 30,000; but perhaps I may come nearer the truth, if I choose a middle course, and suppose their whole force to be about 25,000 men. It is at least certain, that they exceeded us in numbers as much as they did in resources; and that scarcely an hour passed which did not bring in new levies to their army.

The canal, as I have stated, being finished on the 6th, it was resolved to lose no time in making use of it. Boats were accordingly ordered up for the transportation of 1400 men; and Colonel Thornton with the 85th Regiment, the marines, and a party of sailors was appointed to cross the river. But a number of untoward accidents occurred, to spoil a plan of operations as accurately laid down as any in the course of the war. The soil through which the canal was dug, being soft, parts of the bank gave way, and choking up the channel, prevented the heaviest of the boats from getting forward. These again blocked up the passage, so that none of those which were behind, could proceed, and thus, instead of a flotilla for the accommodation of 1400 men, only a number of boats sufficient to contain 350 was enabled to reach their destination. Even these did not arrive at the time appointed. According to the preconcerted plan, Colonel Thornton's detachment was to cross the river immediately after dark. They were to

push forward, so as to carry all the batteries, and point the guns before day light; when, on the throwing up of a rocket, they were to commence firing upon the enemy's line, which at the same moment was to be attacked by the main of our army.

In this mannner was one part of the force to act, while the rest were thus appointed. Dividing his troops into three columns, Sir Edward directed, that General Keane, at the head of the 95th, the light companies of the 21st, 4th and 44th, together with the two black corps, should make a demonstration, or sham attack upon the right; that General Gibbs with the 4th, 21st, 44th, and 93d, should force the enemy's left, while General Lambert with the 7th and 43d remained in reserve, ready to act as circumstances might require. But in storming an entrenched position, something more than bare courage is required. Scaling ladders and fascines had, therefore, been prepared, with which to fill up the ditch and mount the wall; and since to carry these was a service of danger, requiring a corps well worthy of dependence, the 44th was for that purpose selected, as a regiment of sufficient numerical strength, and already accustomed to American warfare. Thus were all things arranged on the night of the 7th, for the 8th was fixed upon as the day decisive of the fate of New Orleans.

While the rest of the army, therefore, lay down to sleep till they should be roused up to fight, Colonel Thornton with the 85th, and a corps of marines and seamen, amounting in all to 1400 men, moved down to the brink of the river. As yet, however, no boats had arrived; hour after hour elapsed before they came; and when they did come, the misfortunes which I have stated above were discovered, for out of all that had been ordered up, only a few made their appearance. Still it was absolutely necessary that this part of the plan should be carried into execution. Dismissing, therefore, the rest of his followers, the Colonel put himself at the head of his own regiment, about fifty seamen, and as many marines, and with this small force, consisting of no more than 340 men, pushed off. But, unfortunately, the loss of time nothing could repair. Instead of reaching the opposite bank, at latest by midnight, dawn was beginning to appear before the boats quitted the canal. It was in vain that they rowed on in perfect silence, and with oars muffled, gaining the point of debarkation without being perceived. It was in vain that they made good their landing and formed upon the beach, without opposition or alarm; day had already broke, and the signal rocket was seen in the air, while they were yet four miles from the batteries, which ought hours ago to have been taken.

In the mean time, the main body armed and moved forward some way in front of the piquets. There they stood waiting for day-light, and listening with the greatest anxiety for the firing which ought now to be heard on the opposite bank. But this attention was exerted in vain, and day dawned upon them long before they desired its appearance. Nor was Sir Edward Pakenham disappointed in this part of his plan alone. Instead of perceiving every thing in readiness for the assault, he saw his troops in battle array, indeed, but not a ladder or fascine upon the field. The 44th, which was appointed to carry them, had either misunderstood or neglected their orders; and now headed the column of attack, without any means being provided for crossing the enemy's ditch, or scaling his rampart.

The indignation of poor Pakenham on this occasion may be imagined, but cannot be described. Galloping towards Colonel Mullens, who led the 44th, he commanded him instantly to return with his regiment for the ladders, but the opportunity of planting them was lost, and though they were brought up, it was only to be scattered over the field by the frightened bearers. For our troops were by this time visible to the enemy. A dreadful fire was accordingly opened upon them, and they were mowed down by hundreds, while they stood waiting for orders.

Seeing that all his well-laid plans were frustrated, Pakenham gave the word to advance, and the other regiments, leaving the 44th with the ladders and fascines behind them, rushed on to the assault. On the left, a detachment of the 95th, 21st, and 4th, stormed a three gun battery and took it. Here they remained for some time in the expectation of support; but none arriving, and a strong column of the enemy forming for its recovery, they determined to anticipate the attack, and pushed on. The battery which they had taken was in advance of the body of the works, being cut off from it by a ditch, across which only a single plank was thrown. Along this plank did these brave men attempt to pass; but being opposed by overpowering numbers, they were repulsed; and the Americans, in turn, forcing their way into the battery, at length succeeded in recapturing it with immense slaughter. On the right, again, the 21st and 4th being almost cut to pieces and thrown into some confusion by the enemy's fire, the 93d pushed on and took the lead. Hastening forward, our troops soon reached the ditch; but to scale the parapet without ladders was impossible. Some few, indeed, by mounting one upon another's shoulders, succeeded in entering the works, but these were instantly overpowered, most of them killed, and the rest taken; while as many as stood without were exposed to a sweeping fire, which cut them down

by whole companies. It was in vain that the most obstinate courage was displayed. They fell by the hands of men whom they absolutely did not see; for the Americans, without so much as lifting their faces above the rampart, swung their firelocks by one arm over the wall, and discharged them directly upon their heads. The whole of the guns, likewise, from the opposite bank, kept up a well directed and deadly cannonade upon their flank; and thus were they destroyed without an opportunity being given of displaying their valour, or obtaining so much as revenge.

Poor Pakenham saw how things were going, and did all that a General could do to rally his broken troops. Riding towards the 44th, which had returned to the ground, but in great disorder, he called out for Colonel Mullens to advance; but that officer had disappeared, and was not to be found. He, therefore, prepared to lead them on himself, and had put himself at their head for that purpose, when he received a slight wound in the knee from a musket ball, which killed his horse. Mounting another, he again headed the 44th, when a second ball took effect more fatally, and he dropped lifeless into the arms of his aide-de-camp.

Nor were General Gibbs and Keane inactive. Riding through the ranks, they strove by all means to encourage the assailants and recal the fugitives;

till at length both were wounded, and borne off the field. All was now confusion and dismay. Without leaders, ignorant of what was to be done, the troops first halted and then began to retire; till finally the retreat was changed into a flight, and they quitted the ground in the utmost disorder. But the retreat was covered in gallant style by the reserve. Making a forward motion, the 7th and 43d presented the appearance of a renewed attack; by which the enemy were so much awed, that they did not venture beyond their lines in pursuit of the fugitives.

While affairs were thus disastrously conducted in this quarter, the party under Colonel Thornton had gained the landing place. On stepping a-shore, the first thing they beheld was a rocket thrown up as a signal that the battle was begun. This unwelcome sight added wings to their speed. Forming in one little column, and pushing forward a single company as an advanced guard, they hastened on, and in half an hour reached a canal, along the opposite brink of which a detachment of Americans was drawn up. To dislodge them was the work of a moment; a boat with a carronade in her bow, got upon their flank, gave them a single discharge of grape, while the advanced guard extended its ranks, and approached at double quick time. But they scarcely waited till the latter were within range, when, firing a

volley, they fled in confusion. This, however, was only an outpost. The main body was some way in rear, and amounted to no fewer than 1500 men.

It was not long, however, before they likewise presented themselves. Like their countrymen on the other side, they were strongly entrenched, a thick parapet with a ditch covering their front; while a battery upon their left swept the whole position, and two field pieces commanded the road. Of artillery, the assailants possessed not a single piece, nor any means beyond what nature gave, of scaling the rampart. Yet nothing daunted by the obstacles before them, or by the immense odds to which they were opposed, dispositions for an immediate attack were made. The 85th extending its files, stretched across the entire line of the enemy, the sailors in column prepared to storm the battery, while the marines remained some little way in rear of the centre as a reserve.

These arrangements being completed, the bugle sounded, and our troops advanced. The sailors raising a shout, rushed forward, but were met by so heavy a discharge of grape and canister, that for an instant they paused. Recovering themselves, however, they again pushed on; and the 85th dashing forward to their aid, they received a heavy fire of musketry, and endeavoured to charge. A smart firing was now for a few mi-

nutes kept upon both sides, but our people had no time to waste in distant fighting, and accordingly hurried on to storm the works; upon which, a panic seized the Americans, they lost their order, and fled, leaving us in possession of their tents, and of eighteen pieces of cannon.

In this affair our loss amounted to only three men killed, and about forty wounded, among the latter of whom was Colonel Thornton. Nor could the loss on the part of the enemy greatly exceed our own. Had they stood firm, indeed, it is hardly conceivable that so small a force could have taken an entrenched position from numbers so superior; at least it could not have been done without much bloodshed. But the fact is, that they were completely surprised. An attack on this side was a circumstance of which they had not dreamed; and when men are assaulted in a point which they deem beyond the reach of danger, it is well known that they defend themselves with less vigour, than where such an event was anticipated.

When in the act of storming these lines, the word was passed through our ranks, that all had gone well on the opposite bank. This naturally added to the vigour of the assault; but we had not followed our flying enemy above two miles, when we were commanded to halt. The real

state of the case had now reached us, and the same messenger who brought the melancholy news, brought likewise an order to return.

The place where we halted was in rear of a canal, across which was thrown a wooden bridge, furnishing, apparently, the only means of passing. At the opposite end of this bridge, stood a collection of wooden cottages, and one chateau of some size. Here, a company was stationed to serve the double purpose of a piquet, and a rear-guard; while the rest of the troops, having rested for half an hour, began their march towards the point where they had landed.

As soon as the main body had got sufficiently on their way, the piquet likewise prepared to follow. But in doing so, it was evident that some risk must be run. The enemy having rallied, began once more to show a front; that is to say, parties of sixty or a hundred men now approached to reconnoitre. These, however, must be deceived, otherwise a pursuit might be commenced, and the re-embarkation of the whole corps hindered or prevented. The officer commanding the piquet, accordingly formed his men, and made a show of advancing. Upon which the Americans fled; when wheeling about, he set fire to the chateau; and, under cover of the smoke, destroyed the bridge and retreated. Making all haste to-

wards the rear, he overtook his comrades just as they had begun to embark; when the little corps being once more united, entered their boats, and reached the opposite bank without molestation.

LETTER XXIII.

AS soon as the whole army was re-united, and the broken regiments had recovered their order, a flag of truce was despatched with proposals for the burial of the dead. To accomplish this end, a truce of two days was agreed upon, and parties were immediately sent out to collect and bury their fallen comrades. Prompted by curiosity, I mounted my horse, and rode to the front; but of all the sights I ever witnessed, that which met me there was beyond comparison the most shocking, and the most humiliating. Within the small compass of a few hundred yards, were gathered together nearly a thousand bodies, all of them arrayed in British uniforms. Not a single American was among them; all were English; and they were thrown by dozens into shallow holes, scarcely deep enough to furnish them with a slight covering of earth. Nor was this all. An American officer stood by smoking a segar, and apparently counting the slain with a look of savage exultation; and repeating over and over to each individual that approached him, that their loss amounted only to eight men killed, and fourteen wounded.

I confess that when I beheld the scene, I hung down my head half in sorrow, and half in anger. With my officious informant I had every inclination to pick a quarrel; but he was on duty, and an armistice existed, both of which forbade the measure. I could not, however, stand by and repress my choler, and since to give it vent would have subjected me to more serious inconvenience, than a mere duel, I turned my horse's head, and galloped back to the camp.

But the change of expression, visible there in every countenance, no language can pourtray. Only twenty hours ago, and all was life and animation; wherever you went you were enlivened by the sound of merriment and raillery; while the expected attack was mentioned in terms indicative not only of sanguine hope, but of the most perfect confidence as to its result. Now gloom and discontent every where prevailed. Disappointment, grief, indignation, and rage succeeded each other in all bosoms; nay, so completely were the troops overwhelmed by a sense of disgrace, that, for a-while, they retained their sorrow without so much as hinting at its cause. Nor was this dejection occasioned wholly by the consciousness of laurels tarnished. The loss of comrades was to the full as afflicting as the loss of honour; for out of more than 7000 men brought on this side into the field, no fewer than 2000 had fallen. Among these were

two generals (for Gibbs survived his wound but a few hours) and many officers of courage and ability; besides which hardly an individual survived, who had not to mourn the loss of some particular and well-known companion.

Yet it is most certain that amid all this variety of conflicting passions, no feeling bordering upon despair, or even terror, found room. Even among the private soldiers no fear was experienced, for if you attempted to converse with them on the subject of the late defeat, they would end with a bitter curse upon those to whose misconduct they attributed their losses, and refer you to the future, when they hoped for an opportunity of revenge. To the Americans they would allow no credit, laying the entire blame of the failure upon certain individuals among themselves; and so great was the indignation expressed against one corps, that the soldiers of other regiments would hardly exchange words with those who chanced to wear that uniform. Though deeply afflicted, therefore, we were by no means disheartened, and even yet anticipated with an eagerness far exceeding what was felt before, a renewal of the combat.

But General Lambert, on whom the chief command had devolved, very prudently determined not to risk the safety of his army by another attempt upon works evidently so much beyond their strength. He considered, and considered justly,

that his chances of success were in every respect lessened by the late repulse. In the first place an extraordinary degree of confidence was given to the enemy; in the next place the only feasible plan of attack having been already tried, they would be more on their guard to prevent its being again put in execution, and lastly his own force was greatly diminished in numbers, while theirs continued every day to increase. Besides, it would be casting all upon the hazard of a die. If again defeated, nothing could save our army from destruction, because, unless it retreated in force, no retreat could be effected. A retreat, therefore, while yet the measure appeared practicable, was resolved upon, and towards that end were all our future operations directed.

To the accomplishment of this desirable object, however, one great obstacle existed;—by what road were the troops to travel, and in what order were they to regain the fleet. On landing, we had taken advantage of the creek or bayou, and thus come up by water within two miles of the cultivated country. But to adopt a similar course in our retreat was impossible. In spite of our losses there were not throughout the armament a sufficient number of boats to transport above one half of the army at a time. If, however, we should separate, the chances were that both parties would be destroyed; for those embarked might be inter-

cepted, and those left behind would be obliged to cope with the entire American force. Besides, even granting that the Americans might be repulsed, it would be impossible to take to our boats in their presence; and thus at least one division, if not both, must be sacrificed.

To obviate this difficulty, prudence required that the road which we had formed on landing should be continued to the very margin of the lake; while appearances seemed to indicate the total impracticability of the scheme. From firm ground to the water's edge was here a distance of many miles, through the very centre of a morass where human foot had never before trodden. Yet it was desirable at least to make the attempt; for if it failed, we should only be reduced to our former alternative of gaining a battle, or surrendering at discretion.

Having determined to adopt this course, General Lambert immediately dispatched strong working parties, under the guidance of engineer officers, to lengthen the road, keeping as near as possible to the margin of the creek. But the task assigned them was burthened with innumerable difficulties. For the extent of several leagues no firm footing could be discovered, on which to rest the foundation of a path; nor any trees to assist in forming hurdles. All that could be done, therefore, was to bind together large quantities of reeds, and lay

them across the quagmire; by which means, at least the semblance of a road was produced, however wanting in firmness and solidity. But where broad ditches came in the way, many of which intersected the morass, the workmen were necessarily obliged to apply more durable materials. For these, bridges composed in part of large branches brought with immense labour from the woods, were constructed; but they were, on the whole, little superior in point of strength to the rest of the path, for though the edges were supported by timber, the middle was filled up only with reeds.

To complete this road, bad as it was, occupied the space of nine days, during which time our army remained in position without making any attempts to molest the enemy. The Americans however, were not so inactive. In the course of two days, six guns were again mounted upon the bank of the river, from which a continual fire was kept up upon our camp. The same mode of proceeding was adopted in front, and thus, night and day were we harassed by danger against which there was no fortifying ourselves. Of the extreme unpleasantness of our situation, it is hardly possible to convey any adequate conception. We never closed our eyes in peace, for we were sure to be awakened before many minutes elapsed, by the splash of a round-shot or shell in the mud beside us. Tents we had none, but lay some in the open

air, and some in huts made of boards, or any materials that could be procured. From the first moment of our landing, not a man had undressed excepting to bathe; and many had worn the same shirt for weeks together. Besides all this, heavy rains now set in, accompanied with violent storms of thunder and lightning, which lasting during the entire day, usually ceased towards dark, and gave place to keen frosts. Thus were we alternately wet and frozen; wet all day, and frozen all night. With the out-posts, again, there was constant skirmishing. With what view the Americans wished to drive them in I cannot tell; but every day were they attacked, and compelled to maintain their ground by dint of hard fighting. In one word, none but those who happened to belong to this army can form a notion of the hardships which it endured, and the fatigue which it underwent.

Nor were these the only evils which tended to lessen our numbers. To our soldiers every inducement was held out by the enemy to desert. Printed papers, offering lands and money as the price of desertion, were thrown in to the piquets, while individuals made a practice of approaching our posts, and endeavouring to persuade the very sentinels to quit their stations. Nor could it be expected that bribes so tempting would always be refused. Many desertions began daily to take place, and became before long so frequent, that the evil rose to be of a serious nature.

There occurred, however, one instance of magnanimous fidelity, on the part of a British soldier, which I cannot resist the inclination of repeating. A private of the 95th, whose name I should have joyfully mentioned had I not forgotten it, chanced one day to stand sentinel, when he was addressed by an American officer. The American offered him a hundred dollars and a quantity of land if he would come over; representing, at the same time, the superiority of a democratical government, and railing, as these persons generally do, against the title of king. Though the Englishman heard what was said distinctly enough, he nevertheless pretended to be deaf, and begged his tempter to come a little nearer, that, in his own words, "he might tell him all about it." Jonathan, exulting at the prospect of drawing this fine fellow from his duty, approached within twenty paces of where he stood, when just as he had opened his mouth to renew his offer, the sentinel levelled his piece and shot him through the arm. Nor was he contented with inflicting this punishment. Walking forward he seized his wounded enemy, and reproaching him with dishonourable dealings, brought him in a prisoner to the camp. But unhappily conduct such as this was rare; in the course of a week, many men quitted their colours, and fled to the enemy.

In the mean time, the whole of the wounded,

except such as were too severely hurt to be removed, were embarked upon the canal, and sent off to the fleet. Next followed the baggage and stores, with the civil officers, commissaries, purveyors, &c. and last of all such of the light artillery as could be withdrawn without trouble, or the risk of discovery. But of the heavy artillery, of which about ten pieces were mounted in front of the bivouac, and upon the bank of the river, no account was taken. They were ship's guns, of little value, and extremely cumbersome; consequently, their removal, had it been practicable, would scarcely have rewarded the trouble. It was therefore determined to leave them behind; and they were accordingly permitted to retain their stations to the last.

These preparations being continued for some days, on the 17th no part of our force remained in camp except the infantry. Having therefore delayed only till the abandoned guns were rendered unserviceable, on the evening of the 18th it also began its retreat. Trimming the fires, and arranging all things in the same order as if no change were to take place, regiment after regiment stole away, as soon as darkness concealed their motions; leaving the piquets to follow as a rear guard, but with strict injunctions not to retire till day-light began to appear. As may be supposed, the most profound silence was maintained; not a man open-

ing his mouth, except to issue necessary orders, and even then speaking in a whisper. Not a cough or any other noise was to be heard from the head to the rear of the column; and even the steps of the soldiers were planted with care to prevent the slightest stamping or echo. Nor was this extreme caution in any respect unnecessary. In spite of every endeavour to the contrary, a rumour of our intended movement had reached the Americans; for we found them of late watchful and prying, whereas they had been formerly content to look only to themselves.

For some time, that is to say, while our route lay along the high road and beside the brink of the river, the march was agreeable enough; but as soon as we began to enter upon the path through the marsh, all comfort was at an end. Being constructed of materials so slight, and resting upon a foundation so infirm, the treading of the first corps unavoidably beat it to pieces; those which followed were therefore compelled to flounder on in the best way they could; and by the time the rear of the column gained the morass, all trace of a way had entirely disappeared. But not only were the reeds torn asunder and sunk by the pressure of those who had gone before, but the bog itself, which at first might have furnished a few spots of firm footing, was trodden into the consistency of mud. The consequence was that every

step sunk us to the knees, and frequently higher, Near the ditches, indeed, many spots occurred which we had the utmost difficulty in crossing at all; and as the night was dark, there being no moon, nor any light except what the stars supplied, it was difficult to select our steps, or even to follow those who called to us that they were safe on the opposite side. At one of these places I myself beheld an unfortunate wretch gradually sink till he totally disappeared. I saw him flounder in, heard his cry for help, and ran forward with the intention of saving him; but before I had taken a second step I myself sunk at once as high as the breast. How I contrived to keep myself from smothering is more than I can tell, for I felt no solid bottom under me, and continued slowly to go deeper and deeper, till the mud reached my arms. Instead of endeavouring to help the poor soldier, of whom nothing could now be seen except the head and hands, I was forced to beg assistance for myself; when a leathern canteen strap being thrown to me, I laid hold of it, and was dragged out, just as my fellow sufferer became invisible.

Over roads such as these did we continue our journey during the whole of the night; and in the morning reached a place called Fisherman's Huts, upon the margin of the lake. The name is derived from a clump of mud-built cottages, situated in as complete a desert as the eye of man was

ever pained by beholding. They stand close to the water, upon a part of the morass rather more firm than the rest. Not a tree or bush of any description grows near them. As far as the eye could reach, a perfect ocean of reeds every where presented itself, except on that side where a view of the lake changed without fertilizing the prospect. Were any set of human beings condemned to spend their lives here, I should consider their fate as little superior to that of the solitary captive; but during many months of the year, these huts are wholly unoccupied, being erected, as their name denotes, merely to shelter a few fishermen, while the fishing season lasts.

Here at length we were ordered to halt; and perhaps I never rejoiced more sincerely at any order than at this. Wearied with my exertions, and oppressed with want of sleep, I threw myself on the ground without so much as pulling off my muddy garments; and in an instant all my cares and troubles were forgotten. Nor did I wake from that deep slumber for many hours, when I rose cold and stiff, and creeping beside a miserable fire of reeds, addressed myself to the last morsel of salt pork which my wallet contained.

The whole army had now come up, the piquets having escaped without notice, or at least without annoyance, forming along the brink of the lake, a line of out-posts was planted, and the soldiers were

commanded to make themselves as comfortable as they could. But in truth the word comfort is one which cannot in any sense be applied to people in such a situation. Without tents or huts of any description (for the few from which the place is named were occupied by the General and other heads of departments) our bed was the morass, and our sole covering the clothes which had not quitted our backs for upwards of a month. Our fires, upon the size and goodness of which much of a soldier's happiness depends, were composed solely of reeds; a species of fuel which like straw soon blazes up, and soon expires again, almost without communicating any degree of warmth. But above all, our provisions were expended, and from what quarter to obtain an immediate supply defied the most inventive genius to discover. Our sole dependence was upon the boats. Of these a flotilla lay ready to receive us, in which were embarked the black corps, with the 44th, but they had brought with them only food for their own use. It was therefore necessary that they should reach the fleet and return again, before they could furnish us with what we so much wanted. But the distance to the nearest of the shipping could not be less than eighty miles, and if the weather should become boisterous, or the winds obstinately adverse, we might starve before any supply could arrive.

These numerous grievances, however, were without remedy, and we therefore bore them with patience; though for two whole days the only provisions issued to the troops were some crumbs of biscuit and a small allowance of rum. For my own part I did not fare so badly as many others. Having been always fond of shooting, I took a fire-lock and went in pursuit of wild ducks, which abounded throughout the bog. Wandering along in this quest I reached a lake, by the margin of which I concealed myself, and waited for my prey; nor was it long before I had an opportunity of firing. Several large flocks flew over me, and I was fortunate enough to kill three birds. But alas! those birds, upon which I had already feasted in imagination, dropped into the water; my dog, more tired than her master, would not fetch them out, and they lay about twenty yards off, tantalizing me with the sight of a treasure which I could not reach. Moving off to another point, I again took my station where I hoped for better fortune; but the same evil chance once more occurred, and the ducks fell into the lake. This was too much for a hungry man to endure; the day was piercingly cold, and the edge of the pool was covered with ice; but my appetite was urgent, and I resolved at all hazards to indulge it. Pulling off my clothes, therefore, I broke the ice and plunged in; and though shivering like an aspin leaf, I re-

turned safely to the camp with a couple of birds. Next day I adopted a similar course, with like success; but at the expense of what was to me a serious misery. My stockings of warm wool were the only part of my dress which I did not strip off, and to-day it unfortunately happened that one was lost. Having secured my ducks, I attempted to land where the bottom was muddy; but my leg stuck fast, and in pulling it out, off came the stocking; to recover it was beyond my power, for the mud closed over it directly, and the consequence was, that till I regained the transport only one of my feet could be warm at a time. To those who can boast of many pairs of fine cotton and woollen hose, this misfortune of mine may appear light, but to me, who had only two stockings on shore, the loss of one was very grievous; and I therefore request that I may not be sneered at, when I record it as one of the disastrous consequences of this ill-fated expedition.

LETTER XXIV.

As soon as the boats returned, regiment after regiment embarked, and set sail for the fleet; but the distance being considerable, and the wind foul, many days elapsed before the whole could be got off. Excepting in one trifling instance, however, no accident occurred, and by the end of the month, we were all once more on board our former ships. But our return was far from triumphant. We, who only seven weeks ago had set out in the surest confidence of glory, and, I may add, of emolument, were brought back dispirited and dejected. Our ranks were wofully thinned, our chiefs slain, our clothing tattered and filthy, and even our discipline in some degree injured. A gloomy silence reigned throughout the armament, except when it was broken by the voice of lamentaion over fallen friends; and the interior of each ship presented a scene well calculated to prove the short-sightedness of human hope, and human prudence.

The accident to which I allude, was the capture of a single boat by the enemy. About thirty men of the 14th dragoons having crowded into an unarmed barge, were proceeding slowly down the

lake, when a boat mounting a carronade in its bow, suddenly darted from a creek, and made towards them. To escape, was impossible; for their barge was too heavily laden to move at a rate of even moderate rapidity; and to fight, was equally out of the question, because of the superiority which their cannon gave to the Americans. The whole party was accordingly compelled to surrender to six men and an officer; and having thrown their arms into the lake, their boat was taken in tow, and they were carried away prisoners.

This, however, was the only misfortune which occured. Warned by the fate of their comrades, the rest kept together in little squadrons, each attend by one or more armed launches; and thus rowing steadily on, they gained the shipping, without so much as another attempt at surprisal being made.

On reaching the fleet, we found that a considerable reinforcement of troops had arrived from England. It consisted of the 40th Foot, a fine regiment containing nearly a thousand men, which, ignorant of the fatal issue of our attack, had crossed the lakes, only to be sent back to the ships, without so much as stepping on shore. The circumstance, however, produced little satisfaction. We felt that the coming of thrice the number could not recover what was lost, or recal past events; and therefore

no rejoicing was heard, or the slightest regard paid to the occurrence. Nay, so great was the despondency which had taken possession of men's minds, that not even a rumour respecting the next point of attack, obtained circulation; while a sullen carelessness, a sort of indifference as to what might happen, seemed to have succeeded all our wonted curiosity, and confidence of success, in every undertaking.

In this state we remained wind-bound till the 4th of February, when, at length, getting under weigh, the fleet ran down as far as Cat Island. This is a spot of sandy soil at the mouth of the lake, remarkable for nothing except a solitary Spanish family, which possesses it. Completely cut off from the rest of the world, an old man, his wife, two daughters, and a son, dwell here in apparent happiness and contentment. Being at least one hundred and twenty miles from the main, it is seldom that their little kingdom is visited by strangers, and I believe that till our arrival, the daughters, though grown up to womanhood, had seen few faces besides those of their parents and brother. Their cottage, composed simply of a few boughs, thatched and in-woven with straw, is beautifully situated within a short distance of the water. Two cows, and a few sheep, grazed beside it, while a small tract of ground covered with stubble, and a little garden well stocked with fruit-

trees and vegetables, at once gave proof of their industry, and showed the source from whence they supplied themselves with bread.

It may appear childish, but I confess that the sight of domestic peace flourishing, as it were, in the midst of wars and tumults, extremely delighted me. While we continued at anchor, therefore, I paid frequent visits to this cottage, and forming a sort of acquaintance with the old man, soon possessed myself of his little history. He had emigrated from Spain many years ago, and married in America. Having been unsuccessful in business, he had saved from the wreck of his property only enough to hire labourers, by whose assistance his present cottage was erected, and his little farm cleared; when, with his wife and three children, then very young, he had withdrawn from society, and settled himself here, where he had remained ever since. Once a year, he or his son visited the main to sell their wool, and purchase such necessaries as their island could not produce; but excepting on these occasions, or when a fishing-boat arrived in his bay, which rarely occurred, he had had no intercourse with any human being, besides his own family, for a great lapse of time. As may be imagined, I found this tribe as simple in their ideas as in their mode of living. Of reading and writing all except the patriarch himself were ignorant, nor did they seem to waste a thought upon

any subject not immediately connected with their bodily wants. They professed, indeed, to be Christians, and would have been probably shocked, had I questioned their claim to sound Catholicism, though I much doubt whether they in the slightest degree understood the meaning of either term.

Having remained here till the 7th, we again took advantage of a fair wind, and stood to sea. As soon as we had cleared the lake, we directed our course towards the east, steering, as it was rumoured, upon Mobile; nor was it long before we came in sight of the bay which bears that name. This is formed by a projecting head-land, called Point Bayo, in a large island called Isle Dauphin. Upon the first is erected a small fort, possessing the same title with the promontory, which commands the entrance; for though the island is at least five miles from the main, there is no water for floating a ship of any burthen, except within a few hundred yards of the latter. The island is, like Cat Island, uninhabited, except by one family, and unprovided with any works of defence.

As the attack of Mobile was professedly our object, it was clear that nothing could be done previous to the reduction of the fort. The ships accordingly dropped anchor at the mouth of the bay, and immediate preparations were made for the siege. But the fort was too inconsiderable in point of size to require the employment of all our

forces in its investment. While one brigade, therefore, was allotted to this service, the rest proceeded to establish themselves on the island, where, carrying tents and other conveniences on shore, the first regular encampment which we had seen since our arrival in this hemisphere, was formed.

The spot of ground, of which we had now taken possession, extended twelve miles in length, and from one to three in width. Its soil is in general dry and sandy, well covered with grass, and ornamented by continued groves of pine, cedar, oak and laurel. On one side only is there a swamp, but not of sufficient size to contaminate the atmosphere of the whole, which is considered so peculiarly healthy, that the place is generally used as a depot for the sick in the American army. At present, as I have said, it was tenanted by no more than a single family, the master of which was a midshipman in the American navy, and banished hither for some misdemeanour; but what was to us of much greater importance, it was likewise stocked with cattle resembling in appearance the black cattle of the highlands of Scotland, and not behind them in point of wildness.

While the remainder of the army spent their time here, the 4th, 21st and 44th, being landed above the fort, were busied in the siege. This small work stands, as I have stated, at the extremity of a promontory. Towards the sea, its forti-

fications are respectable enough, but on the land-side it is little better than a block-house. The ramparts being composed of sand, not more than three feet in thickness, and faced with plank, are barely cannon proof; while a sand-hill rising within pistol-shot of the ditch, completely commands it. Within, again, it is as much wanting in accommodation, as it is in strength. There are no bomb-proof barracks, nor any hole or arch under which men might find protection from shells; indeed, so deficient is it in common lodging rooms, that great part of the garrison slept in tents. To reduce this place, therefore, occupied but a short time. The troops having assembled on the 8th, drove the enemy's within their lines on the 9th, and broke ground the same evening. On the 10th, four eighteen pounders with two howitzers were placed in battery upon the top of the sand-hill; on the 11th, the fort surrendered; and on the 12th, the garrison, consisting of 400 men of the second American regiment, marched out with all the honours of war, and laid down their arms upon the glacis.

With the reduction of this trifling work ended all hostilities in this quarter of America, for the army had scarcely re-assembled, when intelligence arrived from England of peace. The news reached us on the 14th, and I shall not deny that it was received with much satisfaction. Though war is the soldier's harvest, yet it must be confessed, that

when carried on as it had of late been conducted, it is a harvest of which men soon become weary; and many of us having been absent for several years from our native shores, experienced absolute delight at the prospect of returning once more to the bosom of our families. The communication was therefore welcomed with unfeigned joy, nor could any other topic of conversation gain attention throughout the camp, except the anticipated re-embarkation.

But as the preliminaries only had been signed, and as Mr. Madison's approval was required before we should be at liberty to depart, our army still continued stationary upon the island. Of the President's conduct, however, no doubts were entertained, and all thoughts of future military operations were in consequence laid aside. The sole aim of every individual was thenceforth to make himself as comfortable as circumstances would permit, during his sojourn in this wilderness. To effect this end various expedients were adopted. Among others, a theatre was erected, in which such officers as chose to exhibit performed for their own amusement, and the amusement of their friends. In shooting and fishing, likewise, much of our time was spent; and thus, by adopting the usual expedients of idle men, we contrived to pass some days in a state of tolerable comfort.

Occupations such as these, however, soon grew in-

sipid, and it was therefore with sincere rejoicing that we heard Mr. Madison's agreement to the terms proposed on the 5th March promulgated. All was now hope and exultation, an immediate departure was anticipated, and those were pitied as unfortunate whose lot, it was supposed, might detain them even a day behind their fellows. But as yet no movement took place; our provisions were not sufficient to authorize the undertaking so long a voyage as we must undertake, did we attempt to run for the nearest British settlement; we were therefore forced to remain where we were, till a frigate should return, which had been sent forward to solicit supplies from the governor of Cuba.

During this interval, the same occupations were resorted to; and others of a less agreeable nature undertaken. As summer came on, the island sent forth multitudes of snakes from their lurking-places, which infested the camp, making their way in some instances into our very beds. This was bad enough, but it was not the only nuisance to which we were subject. The aligators, which during the winter months lie in a dormant state, now began to awake, and prowling about the margin of the pool, created no little alarm and agitation. Apparently confounded at our invasion of their territories, those monsters at first confined themselves to the marshy part of the island, but

becoming by degrees more familiar, they soon ventured to approach the very precincts of the camp. One of them at length entered a tent, in which only a woman and a child chanced to be, and having stared round as if in amazement, walked out again without offering to commit any violence. But the visit was of too serious a nature to be overlooked. Parties were now formed for their destruction, and it was usual on their return, instead of asking how many birds, to demand how many snakes and aligators they had shot. Of the former, indeed, great numbers were killed, and of the latter not a few, the largest of which measured about nine feet from the snout to the tail.

Another employment, also, deserves to be noted, because it is truly characteristic of the boyish jollity of young soldiers. Wearied with a state of idleness, the officers of the 7th, 43d, and 14th dragoons made an attack with fir-apples upon those of the 85th, 93d, and 95th. For the space of some days they pelted each other, from morning till night, laying ambuscades, and exhibiting, on a small scale, all the stratagems of war; while the whole army, not even excepting the Generals themselves, stood by and spurred them on.

But to continue a detail of such proceedings would only swell my narrative, without amusing you; I shall therefore content myself with observing, that things remained in this state till

the 14th of March, when the long-looked for frigate at length arrived, and on the 15th, the first division of the army embarking, set sail for England. The wind, however, was foul, nor did the ships make any way till the 17th, when a fresh breeze springing up, we stood our course, and by ten o'clock on the 21st, could distinguish the high land of Cuba. But the violence of the gale having driven us considerably to leeward, we were forced to bear up, and beat along the coast, on which account it was not till the 23d that we came opposite to the port of Havannah.

Than the approach to this city, and its first appearance from the water, it is impossible to conceive any thing more grand and imposing. A little bay, extremely narrow at the entrance, forms the harbour. On each side of it stand forts of prodigious strength, particularly those on the left, where the ground is considerably elevated, while the city itself, with its ramparts and towers, its numerous steeples, spires, and public buildings, gives an assurance of wealth and magnificence peculiarly striking. When we entered, every tower was surmounted by a national banner half mast high, a circumstance which at least did not diminish the effect of a first view; and the guns from the forts answering our salute, showed us how desperate must be the condition of an enemy that should venture within their range. Why the flags should

thus indicate a general mourning, we were at a loss to guess, till the pilot informed us that this was holy week. Then, indeed, we remembered that we had returned to a Roman Catholic country, and rejoiced at the lucky accident which had brought us thither at such a season.

As it was late before we anchored, I was prevented from landing that night; but on the morrow I went on shore at an early hour, with the intention of seeing as much as my time would allow. But in my proposed visits to the different points worthy of attention I was interrupted. It was Good Friday, consequently all public places were shut, and neither guides nor carriages could be procured. But if I was disappointed in this, my disappointment was amply compensated by a view of the religious ceremonies peculiar to that day.

Walking into the largest church in the city, I beheld, beside the altar, a figure of our Saviour as large as life, nailed to a cross. Beside this figure stood a number of Monks, one of whom presented a rod, with a sponge affixed to its mouth, while a second thrust a spear into its side, from which came out a liquor having the colour of blood and water. This being carefully caught in a golden dish, the figure was taken down from the cross, wrapped round with white linen clothes, and laid upon a bier, when an imposing procession began in the

following order: First marched a military band, playing slow and solemn music; next came a guard of soldiers, with heads bent down, and arms reversed; then followed about two hundred Monks belonging to different orders, arrayed in their dark robes, with hands and feet bare, and crucifixes suspended from their necks. A short interval now succeeded, and another party of monks dressed in white, appeared, singing hymns in honour of the Virgin. Next came a splendid couch surmounted by a canopy, covered with white silk, and sparkling with gold and jewels, upon which sat a waxen image of the *Mother of God*, clothed in gorgeous apparel. Following this was another party of white robed Monks, chaunting a requiem for a departed soul, and then a second interval. At the distance of perhaps twenty yards from these came two Monks bearing two large silver nails, then two others bearing a spear and a rod, and then the body of our Saviour, stretched at full length upon the bier. After the bier came two Monks bearing two other nails, and then other two bearing a small cross and a ladder. Here, again, there was another interval, which was succeeded by a third white-robed party likewise chaunting a requiem. Next to these came about twenty canons arrayed in scarlet; then another couch covered with crimson velvet, which supported a figure of Mary Magdalen, likewise in a sitting posture; then a second body of canons suc-

ceeded by about two hundred Monks in black; after these, another guard of soldiers, and last of all a second military band.

In spite of prejudice, I could not avoid being deeply struck by this solemn possession. The airs performed by the bands were slow and mournful, the voices of the singers were deep and musical, the dresses were rich to a degree of splendour, and the whole was gone through with much apparent devotion. No doubt, when regarded with the eye of reflection, the whole may seem something worse than ludicrous, but it is impossible to witness the scene, and to reason on its propriety at the same time. As long as the pageant is before your eyes, you are lost in wonder, and a species of awe; nor is it till after it has disappeared, that you are inclined to ask yourself why you gave way to feelings of that nature. Yet, among the natives, I thought I could observe a considerable degree of levity. It is true, that as many as were in the streets, or at the windows, dropped upon their knees while the procession passed, but their careless looks and suppressed smiles sufficiently proved, that they knelt only because they were obliged to kneel.

Commencing at the door of the church where the representation of the crucifixion had been exhibited, the funeral party, (for it was neither more nor less,) proceeded through the principal streets

in the town, with a slow and measured pace. As all except the soldiers walked two and two, it covered, I should conceive, little less than a mile in extent, and after winding from lane to lane, and from square to square, directed its steps towards a particular convent where the waxen image was solemnly deposited in a vault. It is said, but with what truth I cannot pretend to determine, that a different image is made use of every year, and that the vault is now so full of waxen corpses, that it will be necessary before long to have some of them destroyed.

Having now got rid of the most sacred part of their burthen, the Monks, bearing only the two couches, returned in procession by the same route and in the same order as they had proceeded, only the bands struck up lively airs, and the singers chaunted hymns of rejoicing and hallelujahs. Instead of walking at a slow pace, likewise, they stepped out almost in a sort of dance, and reaching the door of the great church, they there separated, each party hastening to its own house to celebrate mass.

Into one or two of the convent chapels I likewise entered, and was present during the performance of their very striking service. I found them ornamented in the most magnificent manner. The rafters of many being gilded over, and all the windows crowded with stained glass. Of pictures, and what struck me as something better than mere

daubs, there were also great numbers. In a word, it seemed as if I had reached the heart and capital of Roman Catholic splendour. Nothing that I had beheld in the mother country could at all compare with what was now before me, and I returned in the evening to my ship, not indeed a convert to the principles of that religion, but decidedly astonished and confounded at the solemn magnificence of its ceremonies.

LETTER XXV.

At an early hour next morning I returned to the city, and found that the face of affairs had undergone a complete revolution. No more melancholy countenances, no closed shops and vacant streets were now to be seen; all was bustle and rejoicing, bells ringing, carriages rattling along, flags flying, and guns firing. The solemnity of Good-Friday ends, it appeared, at ten o'clock on Saturday morning; and from that time the merriments of Easter have their commencement.

The whole of this day I spent in strolling over the different walks, and points of view from whence the town and surrounding country may be seen to most advantage, and I certainly must pronounce it by far the most magnificent colonial capital I have visited. The streets are in general wide, clean, and airy; the houses, except in the suburbs, are composed entirely of stone, and being occasionally intermingled with convents, churches, and other public buildings, produce a very striking and handsome effect. Though surrounded by a rampart, Havannah has little of the confined and straightened appearance by which fortified towns are

generally disfigured. The works being of great extent, have left within their circumference abundant room for the display of elegance and neatness in its construction, an advantage which has not been neglected; while from their situation they command as glorious a prospect as can well be imagined.

When you ascend a bastion which overhangs the harbour, the city with all its towers and spires lies immediately and distinctly beneath your gaze. Beyond it, again, you perceive a winding of the bay, which washes three sides of the promontory where the city stands; numerous fields of sugar cane and Indian corn succeed, intersected by groves of orange and other fruit trees, which extend for some miles in a sort of inclined plane, and are at length bounded by lofty and rugged mountains. On your left again is the creek or entrance to the bay, separating you from the Moro, a line of castles remarkable for their strength and extent. Behind sweep the waters of the Gulf of Mexico; and on the right is another view much resembling that which lies before you, only that it is more narrowed; the high ground bearing in this direction closer upon the city. On the whole, I do not remember to have been more forcibly struck by any scenery, than that which I beheld from this bastion; so well were town and country, castles and convents, land and water, hill and valley, combined.

Having spent some hours in wandering through the city, I endeavoured to make my way into the forts, and to examine the state of the works. But in both of these attempts I was interrupted. Without an order from the Governor I was informed, none, even of the natives are permitted to enter the Moro, and all applications on the part of foreigners, are uniformly refused. There was a degree of jealousy in this, as needless as it was illiberal, but indeed the whole conduct of the Spanish authorities gave proof of their reluctance to admit their old allies, even to the common rites of hospitality. From the moment we entered the harbour the militia of the island were called out, many of the guns which commanded our shipping were shotted, and artillerymen with lighted fuses, stood constantly beside them. An order was likewise issued, prohibiting more than two persons to land at the same time from each vessel, and many other precautions were taken, little complimentary to the good faith of those, to whom Spain must feel that she owes her very existence. In spite of these drawbacks, however, I contrived to spend a week in this city with much satisfaction. The Opera and Theatre opening on Easter Sunday, and continuing open during the remainder of our stay, furnished sufficient amusement for the evenings, while in walking or riding about, in examining the different churches and chapels, and in chatting

with nuns through the grate, or Monks within their cells, my mornings passed away more quickly than I desired.

At length, our victualling and watering being complete, on the 9th of April we bade adieu to the shores of Cuba, and running along with the gulf stream, took our course towards Bermuda. The wind favoured us greatly, and on the 17th we again reached these islands; where we delayed till the 23d, when once more setting sail, we steered directly for England. During the remainder of the voyage nothing of importance occurred till the 7th of May, when reaching in towards the shores of Brest, we were astonished by beholding the tri-coloured flag floating from the citadel. Of the mighty events which had taken place in Europe, we were as yet in perfect ignorance. Though surprised, therefore, at the first view of that beacon of war, we naturally concluded it to be no more than a signal, and passed on without enquiry. As we ascended the channel, however, we were hailed by a schooner which professed to communicate some news concerning Buonaparte; but the wind being high, we could not distinctly tell what was said; nor was it till the 9th, when we had anchored off Spit-head, that the re-appearance of that wonderful man was made known.

The effect of this intelligence it would be difficult to describe. At first it was received with

acclamations, but by and by, those who had dreamed of home began to perceive in it the destruction of their visions. Yet we considered that we were soldiers, and certainly no regret was experienced when we were ordered to re-embark, and sail for the Downs.

Having thus brought my narrative to a conclusion, I cannot lay aside my pen without offering a few remarks upon the events of this busy year, and the nature of an American war in general. In doing so, I shall begin with the unfortunate attack upon New Orleans, and endeavour, in as few words as possible, to assign the true causes of its failure.

From the account which I have given of this affair, it will appear that from its very commencement it was replete with error, and gave promise of no better result than actually occurred. I do not here allude to the spot fixed upon for landing, because that was as appropriate as could be chosen, Neither do I allude to the groundless rumours brought in by deserters ; for to such all assailants are liable ; but the error lay in the steps subsequently adopted ; in the unhappy advance of the first division from a place of concealment into the open country, without pushing forward to the extent required. The fact is, that having reached the main land in safety, one out of two plans might have been selected by General Keane ; which, in

all probability, would have been equally attended with success. Either he might have remained in the morass till the whole army was assembled; or if this was deemed dangerous, he ought to have advanced upon the city, with the first division alone. If it be objected, that a force of 1,600 men was incompetent for an undertaking so hazardous as the latter, I reply that there could be no more hazard in it than in the step which was taken. New Orleans is not a regular fortification, requiring a large army, and a powerful battering train for its reduction. In obtaining possession of it there would have been no difficulty, because I have every reason to believe that the American troops really were, at the time of our landing, some miles above the city; and surely it would not have been more hard to repulse an attack within a town, than in the open country. But neither of these courses was pursued. The advance was withdrawn from concealment, and intelligence of the point threatened, communicated to the American general; the consequence of which was a well-directed attack upon our bivouac, and an immediate commencement of those works which afterwards resisted and repelled all our efforts.

The second error evident in this business, was the selection of the schooner instead of the ship for destruction. Had the latter, which lay farther up the stream, been destroyed, it is clear that the

former never could have passed our battery, nor been of further annoyance to us; whereas, the schooner being burnt, the ship was only removed out of the reach of danger, and posted where she could be infinitely more advantageous to her friends, and detrimental to her enemies. This in itself was a fatal error, and beyond all doubt contributed, in a very great degree, to the repulse on the 29th of December.

The third error, and one which continued to exert its influence throughout the whole campaign, was the delay in bringing on a general action. Why our troops fell back upon the 29th, I confess is to me a mystery. It was not to be supposed that an officer who had shown so much judgment as the American General, Jackson, displayed in his first endeavours to check an advance, would lose the advantages which the nature of his position afforded. That he would fortify the neck of land, indeed, was exactly what must have been expected; and, therefore, every hour during which an attack was deferred, contributed so much to his strength and to our weakness. It is true that we should have suffered, and probably suffered severely; but unquestionably our chances of suffering were not diminished by delay. We ought, therefore, instead of falling back, to have pursued our operations with vigour on that day; because the American lines were not then tenable, and

would have assisted, rather than retarded our progress.

Having once retired, however, and wasted three days in idleness, no other blame can be laid upon the leader of the expedition. His attempt to silence the enemy's guns was unsuccessful, and may therefore be deemed unfortunate in its issue, rather than in its design; but his subsequent plan no words can sufficiently applaud. It was at once bold and judicious; and deserved, in every point of view, a different result from that with which it was attended. But for its failure poor Pakenham is in no way answerable. Against the falling in of the canal, no prudence could provide; and to the loss of time thereby occasioned, the fatal issue of the decisive battle may in some measure be ascribed.

It must, however, be confessed, that this sad calamity was not wholly occasioned by unavoidable accidents. For the conduct of Colonel Mullens, and the 44th Regiment under his command, no excuse can be offered. When I include that corps in the censure bestowed upon its commander, it is evident that I do so only as one would blame schoolboys for deficiency of learning, whose master was unfit for his office. Unless a leader understand his duty, it is not possible that a regiment can conduct itself with propriety; and as the 44th was as much composed of British soldiers

as any battalion in America, no doubt can be entertained but that, had it been differently commanded, it would have made a different figure on the present distressing occasion.

But the behaviour of the Colonel was disgraceful in the highest degree. When the orders were issued for his regiment to bear the fascines and ladders, instead of feeling a pride at the honour conferred upon them, that officer fell into despair. He stated, in the hearing of the private soldiers, that his corps was devoted to destruction; and conducted himself, in every respect, like a condemned criminal on the night previous to his execution. When the troops got under arms, instead of bringing his battalion to the redoubt, where he had been instructed to find the ladders, he marched directly past it, and led them into the field without a single ladder or fascine. When the day dawned, and he was sent back for these instruments, he headed his corps in its retrogade movement, but left it to return as it could to the front; and when sought for to guide the attack, he was no where to be found. That a regiment, thus abused and deserted by its commanding officer, should fall into confusion, cannot occasion any surprise; and therefore the subsequent disorderly advance and hasty retreat of the 44th, were no more than might have been expected.

It may here be asked whether, provided all

things had gone right on this side of the river, provided the 44th had done its duty, and the ladders and fascines had been properly brought up, the delay in carrying the batteries on the opposite side would not alone have occasioned a defeat. This must of course remain as a matter of doubt; but my own private opinion is that it would not. Had the fascines been at hand to cast into the ditch, and the ladders to plant against the rampart as soon as day-light appeared, I conceive that the battle would have ended in favour of the assailants; but as this was not the case, as the army was under fire before these implements were so much as sought for, it is no wonder that victory declared for the Americans. To plant ladders and fascines in open day, and under a heavy discharge of musketry and artillery, requires much coolness and determination, neither of which was evinced by the corps to which that duty was assigned: for being deserted by their leader, and ignorant of the point whither they were to proceed, the soldiers lost their ranks, and advanced or retreated as their individual feelings urged them, covering the field with those very machines which they ought to have carried to the foot of the ramparts. The consequence of this was, that other regiments likewise fell into confusion; and before order could be restored, all the generals were borne dead or wounded from the field. Much the greater part,

therefore, of the blame attachable to this failure, must rest where fidelity of narration has obliged me to place it.

But the primary cause of this defeat may be traced to a source even more distant than any I have mentioned; I mean to the disclosure of our designs to the enemy. How this occurred I shall not take it upon me to declare, though several rumours, bearing at least the guise of probability, have been circulated. The attack upon New Orleans was professedly a secret expedition; so secret, indeed, that it was not communicated to the inferior officers and soldiers in the armament, till immediately previous to our quitting Jamaica. To the Americans, however, it appears to have been known long before, and hence it was, that, instead of taking them unawares, we found them fully prepared for our reception. But it is past, and cannot be recalled, and therefore to point out errors on the part of my countrymen can serve no good end. That the failure is to be lamented, no one will deny, since the conquest of New Orleans would have been beyond all comparison the most valuable acquisition that could be made to the British dominions, throughout the whole western hemisphere. In possession of that post, we should have kept the entire southern trade of the United States in check; and furnished means of commerce to our own merchants, of incalculable value.

The fact is, however, that when we look back upon the whole series of events produced by the late American war, we shall find little that is likely to flatter our vanity, or increase our self-importance. Except a few successes in Canada, at its very commencement, and the brilliant inroad upon Washington, it will be found that our arms have been constantly baffled or repulsed on shore; while at sea, with the exception of the capture of the Chesapeake, and one or two other affairs towards its conclusion, we have been equally unsuccessful. From what cause does this proceed? Not from any inferiority in courage or discipline, because in these particulars British soldiers and sailors will yield to none in the world. There must, then, be some other cause for these misfortunes, and the cause is surely one which has continually baffled all our plans of American warfare.

We have long been habituated to despise the Americans, as an enemy unworthy of serious regard. To this alone it is to be attributed that frigates half manned were sent out to cope with ships capable of containing them within their hulls; and to this, also, the trifling handfuls of troops dispatched to conduct the war by land. Instead of fifteen hundred had ten thousand men sailed from the Garonne under General Ross, how differently might he have acted! There would have been then no necessity for a re-embarkation,

after the capture of Washington, and consequently no time given for the defence of Baltimore; but marching across the country, he might have done to the one city what he did to the other. And it is thus only that a war with America can be successfully carried on. To penetrate up the country amidst pathless forests and boundless deserts, and to aim at permanent conquest, is out of the question. America must be assaulted only on her coasts. Her harbours destroyed, her shipping burned, and her seaport towns laid waste, are the only evils which she has reason to dread; and were a sufficient force embarked with these orders, no American war would be of long continuance.

A melancholy experience has now taught us that such a war must not be entered into, unless it be conducted with spirit; and there is no conducting it with spirit, except with a sufficient numerical force. To the plan which I propose of making desert the whole line of coast, it may be objected, that by so doing, we should distress individuals, and not the Government. But they who offer this objection, forget the nature both of the people whose cause they plead, and of the Government under which they live. In a democratical Government, the voice of the people must at all times prevail. The very members of the House of Representatives are the persons who, from such proceedings, would suffer

most severely, and we all know how far private suffering goes to influence a man's public opinions. Besides, the very principle upon which the advocates for the sacredness of private property proceed, is altogether erroneous. I admit, that, in absolute monarchies, where war is more properly the pastime of kings, than the desire of subjects, non-combatants ought to be dealt with as humanely as possible. Not so, however, in States governed by popular assemblies. By compelling the constituents to experience the real hardships and miseries of warfare, you will soon compel the representatives to a vote of peace; and surely that line of conduct is, upon the whole, most humane, which puts the speediest period to the cruelties of war. There are few men who would not rather endure a raging fever for three days, than a slow and lingering disease for three months. So it is with a democracy at war. Burn their houses, plunder their property, block up their harbours, and destroy their shipping in a few places; and before you have time to proceed to the rest, you will be stopped by entreaties for peace. Whereas, if you do no mischief that can be avoided, if you only fight their fleets and armies wherever you meet them, and suffer the inhabitants to live in undisturbed tranquillity, they will continue these hostilities till they have worn out the means of one party, and greatly weakened those of both.

Should another war break out between Great

Britain and America, this is the course to be adopted by the former. Besides this, I humbly conceive that a second attempt should be made upon New Orleans, since the importance of the conquest would authorise any sacrifice for its attainment; and when once gained, it could be easily defended. The neck of land, upon which that city is built, extends in the same manner above it as below; and therefore the same advantages which it holds out to its present defenders it would likewise hold out to us. A chain of works thrown across from the river to the marsh would render it inaccessible from above; while, by covering the Lakes and the Mississippi with cruisers, all attacks from below would be sufficiently guarded against.

APPENDIX.

THE preceding letters having naturally excited great interest in this country, the scene of the military operations of which they give a narrative, it has been thought that an American edition of them would not be unacceptable. By some the general strain of the work has been considered more liberal than is usual with British writers, when their subject is America; but whatever may be the disposition of the author, his letters contain some gross errors, which it is deemed expedient to correct. The publishers have, therefore, annexed to the present edition, a few notes, in which the principal mistakes of fact are pointed out. The emendations of the British officer's statements, where they do not arise from a comparison of his own text, are in all instances made from official documents; and great pains have been taken to obtain the most accurate information. The reader will see, that nothing further has been attempted than rectifying errors of fact. The British officer's opinions of the American character, and his sarcasms upon our "low cunning," and "the desire to overreach and deceive, so *universal* among the people of this na-

tion," are left to themselves. This country has survived more potent assaults than his, and is destined to be honoured and prosperous long after the slanderers of her fame, and the nation to which they belong, have passed away.

CORRECTIONS AND REMARKS.

I.

Page 120.—"Amounting, *by their own account*, to nine thousand men, a number exactly doubling that of the force which was to attack them."

It would seem from this passage, that the author had been so fortunate as to meet with an American account of the affair of Bladensburg, in which the force opposed to the British, was stated at *nine* thousand; a very convenient number, as proving that one Englishman was an over-match for two Americans. This statement of numbers being accurate, and the *nine* thousand Americans having all been picked, veteran, disciplined, regular, troops, embodied as an army for a long time, accustomed to act in concert, fresh and unworn by any previous fatigue, and possessed of full confidence in themselves and in their commander, it is not surprising that so much was made of the victory in England. Unhappily for the glory of the conquerors, the most authentic documents represent the strength and nature of the force collected at Bladensburg, as very different from what would be supposed by one who trusted to the authority of the British officer, and believed

in his relation of the American "accounts." On this subject there has been thrown abundant light, in consequence of the investigation entered into by congress, of the causes which led to the capture of Washington. The number of the American troops at Bladensburg formed an important feature of the enquiry, and care was taken to obtain from different officers correct returns. From these sources the true strength of the American army may be ascertained with considerable precision. 1. The official letter of General Winder to the Secretary of War, dated three days after the engagement, represents the American force at about 5000. "After all the force that could be put at my disposal in that short time, and making such dispositions as I deemed best calculated to present the most respectable force, at whatever point the enemy might strike, I was enabled by the most active and harassing movement of the troops to interpose before the enemy at Bladensburg about 5000 men, *including* 350 regulars and Commodore Barney's command. Much the largest portion of this force arrived on the ground when the enemy were in sight, and were disposed of to support in the best manner the position which General Stansbury had taken." 2. The committee of Congress, in their report, after stating that the American forces had been variously estimated, and comparing some of the

estimates, come to the conclusion, that the whole number present on the ground was about *six* thousand. This number may therefore be considered the full amount of the American army, which was thus superior in rank and file to the enemy by about one-fourth. The mere statement of numbers, however, can never afford a correct means of judging of the *strength* of an army. Without discipline, and the confidence which discipline inspires, an army (if it can be called so) is only a crowd of men, and becomes confused and unwieldy from its numbers alone. Of the American troops at Bladensburg, it appears, from the official reports, that only 350 were regular disciplined soldiers, and about 700 sailors and marines; the remainder being raw untutored militia, all of whom had left their homes within a week, and many of them within a few hours. Not a man of the land troops had probably ever heard a hostile gun. The whole army was harassed and fatigued with marching and countermarching, and their strength exhausted by loss of rest; having been under arms the principal part of the preceding night. They were hastily collected, from different places, were unknown to each other, and ignorant of their own strength. Part of the militia force was from Baltimore, part from Washington and part from Virginia. No time was given to choose suitable positions. "Much the largest portion," says

General Winder's official letter, "arrived on the ground when the enemy were in sight." So hurried was the formation, that, as it is stated in the report of the Committee of Investigation, it was not known among the officers and men of the first line, that a second line was formed behind to meet the enemy and support them. Such were the numbers and state of preparation of the American troops when the engagement commenced.

II.

Page 122.—"The riflemen likewise now galled us from the wooded bank," &c.

A writer in the Baltimore Federal Gazette, under the signature of "A Stranger," has pointed out the inconsistencies of the British "Officer," with so much clearness, and vindicated the character of the troops engaged, with so much ability, that it seems proper to give place here to those parts of his letter which relate to the battle.

The preliminary detail of the march of the British, from their place of landing to the field of action, is not now to the purpose; but, having brought the troops of the expedition up to the bridge of Bladensburg, and to the order given for crossing it, the "narrator" tells us of the execution occasioned by the American guns to the left of the road, of the "tremendous effect" of the gun-battery placed on the road, and then adds—

"The riflemen, likewise, now galled us from the "wooded bank, with a running fire of musketry; and "it was not without trampling upon many of their "dead and dying comrades, that the light brigade "established itself on the opposite side of the "stream."

The reader will be pleased to keep this statement in view, the better to appreciate what is to come hereafter. It shews, that at the first onset, the troops of the republic displayed a becoming spirit. It shews, that in the advance of the British to the bridge, when on the bridge, and during the whole of their efforts to establish themselves "on the opposite side of the stream," the American guns to the left of the road, the battery on the road, and the riflemen placed on the wooded bank, performed their duty, and maintained the honour of their country. However, when once on the right bank of the stream, says the narrator, "every thing else appeared easy," and accordingly, as he states it, the first line of the Americans soon gave way, falling back in confusion on the second line, and leaving in the hands of the British two pieces of cannon. They (the British) then rushed on to the attack of the second line—but *mark!*

"The Americans, however, stood firm, and having "the whole of their artillery, with the exception of "those captured on the road, and the greater part of "their infantry in this line, they first checked the ar- "dour of the assailants by a heavy fire, and then, in "their turn, advanced to recover the ground which "was lost."

Here we discover from the text of the "narrator" that "*every thing*" did *not* turn out to be just quite so "*easy*" as had been anticipated, for we find that the Americans, not satisfied, unaccommodating fellows! with having "*stood firm*"—not satisfied with

having "*checked* the ardour of the assailants by a heavy fire," they would, it seems, do a *little more*—they, bold spirits as they were! in their turn actually "*advanced* to recover the ground which was lost" by the retreat of the first line. They were even so unreasonable as not to stop here—they must do *more still*, as follows:

"Against this charge, the extended order of the "British troops would not permit them to offer an "effectual resistance, and they were accordingly "borne back to the very thicket upon the river's "brink, where they maintained themselves with de- "termined obstinacy, repelling all attempts to drive "them through it; and frequently following to with- "in a short distance of the cannon's mouth, such "parts of the enemy's line as gave way."

All this is most important to the vindication of the American character, from the foul aspersion, with which, as it will be seen in the conclusion, this "narrator" would overwhelm it. It is here to be observed, that he admits *a charge* on the part of the Americans. He fully admits, that the militia of America, within the first hour they ever saw a shot fired in anger, charged the veteran troops of England, hot from the European continent, seasoned by years of war, flushed with victory, and crowned with conquest. They charged not only the *veteran* troops of England, which had been so instrumental in subduing France, but the very *pick* and *flower* of those troops. They not only charged them, as we see by the admissions of the "narrator" but bore them back at the point of the bayonet, for a considerable distance from the second line, even "to the very thicket upon the river's brink," where, we are to presume, "the very thicket" and the nature of the ground, gave them an advantage, enabling them to make a

stand against their assailants, and *frequently* to follow "*such parts*" of the American line as gave way. This is most material, and should be taken fully into the mind of the reader, who will readily perceive, that the contest at this period of the battle must have been extremely obstinate, of considerable duration, and maintained altogether by the bayonet. It is necessary to keep this in view, for reasons to be seen in the sequel. But it should be observed here—unless the contest had been long and obstinate, the British could not have had opportunities of *frequently* following *such parts* of the American line as gave way, and had not *such parts* as are said to have frequently given way, *as frequently* returned to the charge, the contest for complete mastery could not have lasted so long as it appears it in fact did, by the following passage :

"*In this state the action continued* till the second "brigade had likewise crossed, and formed upon the "right bank of the river; when the 44th regiment "moving to the right, and driving in the skirmishers, "debouched upon the left flank of the Americans, "and completely turned it. In that quarter, there- "fore, the battle was won; because the new militia- "men, who were stationed there, as being the least "assailable point, when once broken could not be "rallied. But on their right, the enemy still kept "their ground with much resolution, nor was it till "the arrival of the 4th regiment, and the advance "of the British forces in firm array to the charge, "that they began to waver."

From this we learn, that the battle raged upon the "river's brink," not only till the second British brigade had crossed and formed, but till it had succeeded in driving in the skirmishers upon its right, when, after a sharp action, and from a circumstance

to be stated by and bye, it was enabled to out-flank and turn the left of the American line. But *mark* again! "On the right the Americans still kept their ground *with much resolution*," nor was it, as we see, till the great body of the British force advanced in front, while the 44th appeared in the rear, that the right of the American line "began to waver." They would have been most extraordinary men, indeed, had they not began to *waver* under such circumstances. The wonder is, not that unseasoned Militia did not do more, but that they achieved so much. They were raw, not merely unacquainted with the arts and hardships of war, not merely unacquainted with a uniform system of discipline, but unused to that steady and uninterrupted practice of discipline, without which soldiers can but ill perform all that is expected of them in a field of battle. They were not merely raw, the regiments were also strangers to each other, they had never had even the advantage of a field day together. They were collected hastily from different points; the General had not time to examine the *materiel* with which he had to work; he had not time to ascertain what regiments were best suited to such and such points of service; some of them were sinking with fatigue, unrefreshed, after long and rapid marches; one regiment arrived on the ground as the British entered Bladensburg, and had they been up ten minutes sooner, this regiment, which had to cross the bridge to gain the American position, would have been cut off. They fought under these and other disadvantages, yet on summing up the whole of the account, it will be seen that they fought *well*.

Let us then proceed to see how this account stands. It cannot be too frequently impressed upon the minds of men interested for the honour of their country,

and the impartial of all nations will be gratified to see arrogance humbled, whilst justice is rendered to the virtues and the valour of the citizen and the soldier.

Thus, then, stands the account. The "narrator" admits, that on the advance of the British, the American guns to the left of the road, kept up a *continued fire*, "with some execution;" that the battery on the road itself opened with "*tremendous effect*;" that the rifle-men *galled* them with a running fire; that it was not without trampling on many of their dead and dying, that the British established themselves on the right bank of the stream; that having then drove in the first line, and taken two guns, the second American line, notwithstanding the discomfiture and confusion of the first, "*stood firm*," checked the ardour of their assailants by a heavy fire, advanced upon them, charged them, drove them back to the river, and there maintained the fight, bayonet to bayonet, till a fresh brigade, having effected its passage of the bridge, deployed, repulsed the skirmishers on its right, and after a conflict of "half an hour," out-flanked and turned the left of the American line, the right continuing to keep its ground with much resolution, and only wavering when on the point of being placed, by the events of the day, between two fires.

Such, as far as we have gone, is the amount of this "narrator's" *admissions*—his *unavoidable* admissions, for it is pretty evident, from the studied artifice and sophistry of his whole narrative, he would admit nothing favourable to America that he *could* avoid, or, as the editor of the *Federal Gazette* has judiciously observed, that did not tend to enhance the merit of the British army in overcoming difficulties. But is there a man of candour or common sense,

having read the facts as stated above by this "narrator," who would not declare that the Americans made a gallant stand, and that they only yielded when skill or courage no longer could avail against an enemy to whom fortune, and the force of circumstances, had thrown the laurel?

So far as I can see from the whole of the case, and particularly from the evidence of this British narrator, and what better evidence can be adduced to the point, there was at the time much unjust and *extremely inconsiderate* obloquy poured upon the troops engaged at Bladensburg. As to the excellent conduct of Commodore BARNEY's men, there has been no difference of opinion, and as to the militia, it appears from, in this respect, the *indisputable* testimony of the British narrative, that they did *as much* as their fellow-citizens could have any reasonable ground to expect—They did *more* than men of military experience would count upon, and if they did not do *all* that they themselves could have wished, next to the peculiarly harassing and disadvantageous circumstances under which they came to the ground, the misfortune is to be attributed to the erroneous military system of the country—just as radically erroneous and deceptive, as that which has reduced the American army to its present weak, I had almost said, *ridiculous* situation.

But to be beaten is not in itself a disgrace; it is the manner of defeat that can alone cast a shade upon the vanquished. Had the Americans fled from Bladensburg, without a battle—had they retired on the first *demonstration* of the enemy—had they shrunk when first fleshed by the British fire—had they abandoned their Capital without a struggle, and a desperate struggle too, then would they have deserved the scorn of their own, and the contempt of every

foreign army; but taking what I have quoted from this partial British narrator to be true, it is impossible not to admit, that the enemy, unintentionally no doubt, has placed the battle of Bladensburg in a point of view, most favourable for the Americans engaged on that day. In an unguarded moment the "narrator" has twined a chaplet where he would have fixed a thorn—bestowed a laurel where he would have planted cypress, and with an infatuated anxiety to defame, has raised the character of the American militia, fresh, buoyant and unsullied, far above the dishonourable tomb to which he would, for himself, so *disgracefully* consign it.

Harsh words do not, I know, constitute argument, or facts, or evidence in any cause, but what terms of reproach can be inapplicable to a writer, who, after such admissions and statements as the above—who, however involuntarily, having raised a testimonial to American bravery, concludes thus:—

"The fact is, that with the exception of a party of "sailors from the gun-boats, under the command of "Commodore Barney, NO TROOPS COULD BEHAVE "WORSE THAN THEY DID."

Is the reader startled? I confess I was, on first reading the foregoing sentence. All the preceding part of his narrative, in relation to the battle of Bladensburg, contradicts, unequivocally contradicts, this sweeping, this unblushing, this unsoldier-like assertion. He gives facts, and facts that must be held indisputable when coming from an enemy; and then, unmindful of truth, and his own reputation, gives a sweeping *opinion* in the very teeth of those facts, of which, but a few moments before, he had been the narrator.

If, as he *asserts*, that "no troops could behave worse than they [the Americans] did," how was it

that the guns to the left of, and on the road, were so well, and for the British, so *fatally* served? If "no troops could behave worse," how was it, that the British were so *galled* by the American riflemen? If "no troops could behave worse," how was it that the British troops had to trample upon so many of their dead and dying, before they could establish themselves on the right bank of the stream? If "no troops could behave worse," how was it that the second American line, not only "*stood firm*," but charged the British, drove them back to the river, and fought them there, with various success, till, much time having elapsed, their left was turned by a fresh brigade brought up for the purpose? If "no troops could behave worse," how was it that the left of the Americans frequently repulsed the attacks of this fresh brigade, as, according to the admission of this narrator, in a passage not quoted above, it took them *half an hour* of serious fighting before they succeeded in turning this point of the American line? If "no troops could behave worse," how was it that after this distressing event, sufficient to appal the most experienced troops, the right of the Americans "still kept their ground with much resolution," [killing *a few*, no doubt,] and that they did not even *waver*, till attacked in front and rear, by a superior force? If "no troops could behave worse," how was it, according to the shewing of the narrator himself, that the battle lasted for three hours? In a word, if "no troops could behave worse," how was it, again according to his own statement, that the loss of the British on the field, in killed and wounded, amounted, out of so small an army engaged, to not less than FIVE HUNDRED MEN!

The "narrator" has, as we see, furnished the means of exposing the absurdity of the assertion,

that no troops could behave worse than the Americans did on this difficult and trying occasion. It is more than absurd—it is dishonourable; for it is clearly to be collected from his own statement, that the Americans were firm in their stand, bold in their charge, obstinate in their resistance, and conspicuous in their valour. Had it fallen to my lot to have had a place in the American ranks on the day of Bladensburg, I should feel no apprehension in submitting my conduct and character, as a soldier, to be judged by this statement of the enemy—I should require no better support of the one, or proof more conclusive in favour of the other.

III.

Page 124.—"In that quarter, therefore, the battle was won; because *the raw militia men who were stationed there*, as being the least assailable point, when once broken, could not be rallied."

To shew the unfairness and incorrectness of this writer, it is only necessary to repeat what has been stated in a preceding note, that of the whole body of Americans at Bladensburgh, only 350 were regulars, and these were raw soldiers recently enlisted, who had never witnessed an engagement. The "raw militia men who were stationed on the left," were, in fact, the 5th regiment of Baltimore, composed of volunteers, and the best disciplined corps of militia on the ground. Their

flight is attributed by the writer of the essay mentioned in the last note, to a deficiency of ammunition.

IV.

Page 129.—"Scarcely had the party bearing the flag entered the street, than they were fired upon from the windows of one of the houses, and the horse of the General himself, who accompanied them, killed."

To the indignation excited by this "unjustifiable conduct," this "direct breach of the law of nations," the author, probably desirous of lightening the disgrace of an act for which all Europe has cried shame upon them, attributes the Gothic revenge of his countrymen. The reproach of premeditated outrage must nevertheless continue to darken the British character. Incontestible proofs exist, that the design of destroying the public buildings was resolved upon, before the flag of truce entered the city, and these proofs are derived from no less authority, than that of the officers by whom it was executed. 1. On the 18th of August 1814, a letter was addressed by Admiral Cochrane to Mr. Monroe, then Secretary of State, announcing his intention "to destroy, and lay waste, such towns and districts upon the

coast, as may be found assailable." It is worthy of remark, that this kindly epistle, which breathes so much tenderness towards "brethren of a common descent and language," was not delivered at Washington until seven days *after* the purpose had been executed at that place. The manœuvre, by which an appearance was held forth to the world, of previous notice to the American government, and of an alternative having been given them, was worthy of those who planned it. 2. In his official letter to Earl Bathurst, General Ross announces the destruction of the public buildings, as the conclusion of a previous determination. "Judging it, (he says) of consequence to complete the destruction of the public buildings with the least possible delay," &c. and after detailing with great apparent satisfaction the havoc and spoil that had been committed, this worthy officer adds, "*The object of the expedition having been accomplished*, I determined, before any greater force of the enemy could be assembled, to withdraw the troops;" and concludes, "Sanguine in hoping for the approbation of his royal highness the prince regent, and of his majesty's government, as to the conduct of the troops under my command, I have," &c. In this hope he was not disappointed. The thanks of the Parliament were voted to the army, and a monument was erected in Westminster Abbey,

to honour the memory of an officer whose military exploits consisted in the defeat of a body of farmers and mechanics, collected together under the name of an army, with a strong corps of veterans, and the unprovoked destruction of legislative halls, the burning of public libraries, and records, and the pillage of printing offices. As if this manifestation of the prince regent's approbation were not sufficient, an augmentation of armorial bearings has been granted to his family, and his descendants have been "graciously permitted," to style themselves, for the future, "Ross of Bladensburg." Admiral Cockburn, the naval leader on this memorable occasion, has since been characteristically promoted to the chief command at the prison of St. Helena. 3. If other proof were wanting of the incorrectness of the intimation in the text, that the burning of the public buildings was occasioned by the firing upon the flag of truce, it is furnished by the following extract from a letter written by Mr. J. S. Skinner, post-master at Baltimore, to the editors of the National Intelligencer.

"It is known to you that I was the agent appointed by the Commissary General, for the exchange of prisoners and the medium of intercourse between the government and the enemy in the waters of the Chesapeake, during the war. The duties of this service brought me very frequently in company with

their commanding officer, for the time being, and with none so often as with Admiral Cockburn.

"In conversation with him very soon after the conflagration of the Capitol and the President's House, that proceeding was condemned by me in terms such as the occasion justified; whereupon he, who was decidedly the most active "officer in the expedition," expressly stated, that at the time the gun was fired from the house which killed General Ross's horse, he and the General had *already halted* to confer about the burning of the Capitol—that the measure had *already been proposed*, and was then the subject of deliberation. He said not one word about any "*flag of truce*," nor did he attempt to justify the act; —on the contrary, he said he had, upon further reflection, experienced much regret that it should have been done, and declared that, if it were revocable, it would not be repeated under similar circumstances."

V.

Page 131.—"All this was as it should be."

The writer of the letter, to the editor of the Baltimore Federal Gazette, from which extracts have been made in a preceding note, furnishes the following additional instance of outrage, which might, one would suppose, have shocked even the optimism of the British "Officer."

"There are atrocities which strike so forcibly on sensitive and honourable minds, as to be considered incapable of a parallel, till something more atrocious still succeeds; and then we wonder at our not having taken a more extensive view of the dark side of the

human character. We are shocked and indignant on reading of the burnings at Washington, and conceive that scarcely more could be executed in the range of savage devastation; but if the destruction of the Capitol, the President's House, the Library, the Printing Offices, and the Archives, excite so much indignation and disgust, what will posterity say of the following Vandalism?

"In the navy yard at Washington, a monument of the purest marble, of classic design, and exquisite workmanship, had been erected by their surviving comrades to the memory of some officers who fell in the naval attack of the Americans on Tripoli. This monument, so creditable to the arts; so beautiful in its structure; so interesting in its nature; so dear to friendship; dedicated by youthful heroes who survived, to youthful heroes who perished; this monument, which should at once have found its way to the sympathies of a brave man, and which a true soldier could scarcely contemplate without a tear; this monument, so solemn, so consecrated, so sacred, which seemed to have its very foundations in the finest affections of the heart; this monument was attacked by the British, and now you may read on its southern side,

"MUTILATED BY BRITONS,
On the 25th of August,
1814!"

"Can the whole scope of that language which is common to both nations; can that language, so rich, so flowing, and so energetic, furnish terms sufficiently strong, to depict in appropriate colours, the barbarism of this act? Jurists may write, define, and promulgate national law; but they will never say, that the burning of the civil buildings or even of the library in the Capital of the United States, equalled

in atrocity and heartlessness the mutilation of this monument.

"Had it been a pile commemorative of some of the many American victories over the English themselves, such fact might be offered by folly or wounded pride, in palliation; but, when it was in record of a deed which Britons would have been proud to emulate, and which they did subsequently emulate at Algiers, the shadow of an excuse did not present itself. Are we then to assume, that it sprang from rancour, the base ingredient of little minds, or from a spirit of vengeance, inspired by humiliations previously inflicted by the arms of America? Had an expedition from the United States made an incursion into England, [and it could have been easily effected] and meeting with a monument erected to some of her naval heroes, attacked and mutilated that monument, what would have been the exclamations and the curses of Englishmen? What would have been the language of their press? Would not the Americans have been painted as more barbarous than the savages, who, untaught and ungoverned, range the western wildernesses of this Continent? Is there an epithet of opprobrium that would not have been cast upon them with a lavish hand? Let then the author of the narrative under consideration, reflect on the fact I have stated, and sink to the earth in shame—let his countrymen reflect upon the foul deeds attached to the history of their campaigns in this country, and they will see the wisdom of avoiding whatever may lead to a comparison of their arms with those of America. The "narrative of an officer who served in the expedition" may gratify the inflated arrogance, and tickle the insatiate vanity of the British nation—it may administer to England's well known hatred of America, and put money into the

pockets of its author, but with the world in general it seems better calculated to bring odium on both, than to shed a lustre upon either. No work could be more indiscreet—it has roused to life and action feelings in American bosoms that time had lulled to repose, and as this is but a feeble exposure of its deformity, its egotism and its falsehood will doubtless be touched by many an abler hand—it will have the withering merit of blasting the cause it would sustain; for it will drag into noon-day light before other nations, those infamies which England should wish to see entombed forever in the grave of Ross.

"But the writer of the narrative not only *asserts* what he himself had by his admissions previously shewn to be untrue, but he omits what would prove the British loss in the campaigns against Washington to have been even more considerable than his detail would induce one to suppose.

"He omits altogether the loss of at least one hundred men, occasioned by the careless throwing of a match into a dry well, in the arsenal yard, in which a large quantity of gunpowder had been deposited. The havoc was terrible. Among the sufferers was Captain BLANCHARD of the royal engineers. He was dug out of the river a few days after, in full uniform, his sword by his side, just as he was blown off and covered by the explosion. In a small silver case, attached by a belt to his person, were found his papers by which he was known. The case also contained the orders of the day, and a sketch of the country through which the army had passed. He was buried—and the nature of his death was regretted by those whose soil he had invaded—when once the battle is over, no soldier can ever wish to see a soldier, though an enemy, perish—

"The "narrator" also omits the *desertions,* which

were numerous. Had it been possible for General Ross to have remained for a week in Washington, even should not a battle have intervened, he would have found himself *without an army!*—As it was, he lost, in every way, not less than *eleven hundred men*, and some of his best officers. Upon the whole, it is to be collected from the long digested detail of their enemy, that the Americans had more to be proud of than to regret at the battle of Bladensburg; and, had it not been for the closing calumny of this "narrator," he should not have provoked the moderation of

A STRANGER."

VI.

Page 162.—Sir Peter Parker's affair.

Few of the events of the war have been more misrepresented in England than this. Our author tells us, that an encampment of "*three* hundred *men* and six pieces of cannon," had been formed by the Americans; that Sir Peter Parker landed with 200 seamen and marines, and found the enemy in full retreat; that then "a little skirmishing ensued," in which Sir Peter was killed, and that the British, finding the enemy retiring still farther into the country, returned to their vessel. The official letter of the "acting commander" to Admiral Cochrane, goes a step further in estimating the number of Americans at "*five* hundred,

with a troop of horse and five pieces of artillery." The number of the British is stated at 124, and the modest "acting commander," relates that the Americans were twice forced from their position, and, in the end, completely routed, and their camp gained. To crown the whole, a monument has been erected in Westminster Abbey, to perpetuate the memory of Sir Peter and the fame of this exploit, upon which the wondering citizens may read,

"Here lies interred the Mortal Remains of
Sir PETER PARKER, Baronet, aged 28 years,
Captain of his Majesty's Ship Menelaus;
An accomplished Officer and Seaman,
Who, after landing with part of his crew on the coast of America,
Defeated an Enemy, supported by Cavalry and Artillery,
THREE TIMES THE NUMBER OF HIS OWN FORCE:
And in the moment of *Victory* received a mortal wound,
Under which he continued to cheer his men to *follow up* their
Triumph;
Until sinking under its fatal result,
He fell into the arms of the *Companions of his Glory.*"
&c. &c.

Such is the British idea of the rencounter. It is amusing to contrast it with the actual occurrence. The Americans, who were all militia, few of whom "had ever heard the whistling of a ball," were commanded by Colonel Philip Reed, an officer of the revolutionary war, who transmitted an exact statement of the engagement to General Chambers, of the Maryland militia. The whole num-

ber of Americans present of all descriptions was 170. The author of the 'Narrative,' admits that the British force was 200 seamen and marines. The "little skirmishing" of which he speaks, was a well fought contest for the possession of the American camp, in which the British were finally defeated, and forced to retreat with the loss of their commander; and, as themselves admitted, 14 killed, and 27 wounded. So precipitate was their retreat from this scene of "triumph," that many of the wounded "companions of their glory" were left on the field. Of the Americans not one was killed, and only three were wounded. It should not be omitted, however, that the engagement was fought at night, and the British who probably "fancied every bush an" enemy, may have reckoned the host opposed to them, more by the execution that was done, than by ocular testimony. Thus fallacious are monuments and the official letters of British commanders.

VII.

Page 179.—"Judging from appearances, I should say that the corps now opposed to us amounted to *six* or *seven* thousand men."

The author is here, as usual, in the wrong as to the force of the American army. He is "ill

at numbers," and seems to think, with Armado, that "reckoning fitteth the spirits of a tapster." The corps opposed to the British at North Point, consisted, according to unquestionable authority, of the 5th regiment 400 men, the 27th 500 men, the 39th 450 men, the 51st 700 men, 150 riflemen, 140 cavalry, 75 artillerymen with six four pounders, making an aggregate on the ground of 2415 men of various descriptions, *all of them however, militia or volunteers.* The 6th regiment consisting of 620 men, and 150 of the 5th, were posted as a reserve, about a mile in the rear. The number of the British is not stated by the author of the "Narrative" in this place. He admits, however, at page 164, that they were able to bring into the field "five thousand fighting men," notwithstanding the loss at Bladensburg. We may reasonably conclude that the whole number of fighting men was landed at North Point, and that it exceeded considerably the computation of our author. General Smith, who commanded in chief at Baltimore, estimated their strength at from 6 to 7000 men, and taking all estimates into consideration it may fairly be computed at about six thousand, more than twice the number of the Americans present.

VIII.

Page 185.—" In spite of the short duration of the action, which lasted little more than two hours, the enemy's loss was severe."

The official return of the killed and wounded, signed by Leonard Frailey, Brigade Major, shewed the total loss of the Americans to have been 24 killed and 139 wounded. The loss of the British, according to their official return, was 46 killed and 295 wounded.

IX.

Page 192.—"Darkness had now come on, and as yet no intelligence had arrived from the shipping."

It is remarkable that no notice is taken in these letters of the repulse of the British fleet from Fort M'Henry, an action which covered the garrison with glory, and contributed essentially to the final retreat of the expedition. While room was found for the detail of every petty skirmish, in which the British arms could be made to appear successful; the author has omitted all mention of an engagement, in the issue of which the land forces

were immediately interested, which was maintained with great obstinacy for more than twenty-four hours, in which a surprising degree of coolness, skill, and courage was displayed by the garrison, and from which the assailants were compelled to retire with immense loss.

X.

Page 254.—"The whole course of the Mississippi, from its spring to its mouth, may be computed at little short of 5000 miles."

The author seems to have a strange propensity to exaggerate whatever he meets with in America. The length of the Mississippi was never supposed to exceed considerably *three* thousand miles; and Mr. Schoolcraft, in his narrative, lately published, has determined the distance from its source to its mouth with accuracy. "The entire length," says he, "of this wonderful river from Cassina lake (from which it takes its course,) to the gulph of Mexico, is 3038 miles, more than half the distance from the arctic circle to the equator." Narrative of the Expedition under Governor Cass, page 254.

XI.

Page 261—" It was therefore determined at all hazards to take them."

The defence made by Lieutenant Jones, commanding the American gun boats, was one of the most brilliant exploits of the war, and must have convinced the enemy that they were not likely to obtain possession of New Orleans, without a desperate struggle. The American force consisted, according to the official returns, which agrees with the estimate in the text, of five gun boats, carrying altogether 23 guns, and manned by only 182 men. The enemy's launches and barges, were, according to Lieutenant Jones, in number 45, but according to the author of the "Narrative," 50, the number of their cannon was 42, and the flotilla was manned with 1200 men. Notwithstanding this disparity of force and numbers, the action was maintained for more than two hours, and the enemy only succeeded by dint of numbers, and with the loss, according to the computation of Lieutenant Jones, of about three hundred men. The British commander, however, only admitted a loss of 94 men.

XII.

Page 289.—Night attack of the 23d of December.

In his "Historical memoir of the war in Louisiana," &c. Major Latour, whose official situation gave him the means of obtaining the most accurate information, has detailed the principal events of this campaign, with great minuteness. We are thus fortunately in possession of facts, by the standard of which, the assertions of the British "officer," may be tested. Of the forces engaged in the battle of the 23d, Major Latour gives the following statement, which the reader will find to differ materially from that of the text. From the expressions of the author of the "Narrative," one would be led to suppose, that only the advance of the British, consisting according to him of 1600 men, was on the ground. It appears, however, from Letter XXI, that "part of the second brigade," arrived in time "to share in the danger and glory of the night." The number who thus participated in "the danger and glory," is not given, but Major Latour fortunately enables us to supply the deficiency.

"Though the precise amount of the enemy's forces in this action cannot be exactly ascertained, it is well known that half of general Keane's division was en-

camped on the banks of the Mississippi, at the beginning of the attack; and that the remaining half of the division, which had embarked at the encampment on Isle-aux-Pois, in light vessels, several of which had run aground in the lake, had got on board of the barges that returned, after having landed the first half, and were disembarking when the cannon began to fire; that the greater part of these troops set out immediately from the landing place, two miles and a half from the Mississippi, and ran towards the field of battle, where their first platoons had already arrived, before Coffee's division began to fire, and where they all successively arrived long before the action was over, as it lasted till 10 o'clock at night.

"That division, composed of the regiments we have already mentioned, could not amount to less than four thousand five hundred men, as we know the strength of each regiment.

"The first disembarkation consisted of the light brigade commanded by colonel Thornton, composed

of part of the 85th regiment, of	650 men.
95th do. (rifle corps)	500
A detachment of sappers and miners	100
A detachment of the rocket brigade, commanded by captain Lane	80
4th regiment	750
Total	2080 men.
The 2d disembarkation consisted of the 21st regiment (royal North Britain) Fusileers	900
44th do.	750
93d do.	1100
A number of artillerists amounting according to the best information, to	150
In all	4980 men.

"On the supposition that each regiment left a party on board the vessels, to take care of the baggage, as is sometimes the case, there would still remain four thousand five hundred effective men landed on the 23d before 9 o'clock in the evening; and indeed several accounts from Jamaica, Providence, and Bermuda, make the number amount to five thousand.

"Let us now see with what number, and what kind of troops, the commander-in-chief, general Jackson, attacked this enemy, so powerful, so inured to warfare, preceded by a great reputation, and enjoying every possible advantage.

"The right, commanded by general Jackson in person, was composed of a detachment of marines, under

the command of lieut. Bellevue	66	men
A detachment of artillery with two six-pounders, under the immediate command of col. M'Rea and lieut. Spotts	22	strong
7th regiment, major Peire	465	
44th, commanded by captain Baker	331	
	——884	

"*Major Plauche's battalion.*

Carabiniers, captain Roche	86
Dismounted dragoons, major St. Geme	78
Louisiana blues, captain White	31
Francs, captain Hudry	33
Chasseurs, captain Guibert	59
	——287
The battalion of St. Domingo men of colour, major Daquin	210
Chactaws, captain Pierre Jugeant	18
	——228
The left, commanded by general Coffee, was composed as follows:	
Tennessee volunteer mounted riflemen, forming general Coffee's brigade	563
Orleans rifle company, captain Beale	62
Mississippi dragoons, major Hinds	107
	——732
In all	2131

"Of this number it is to be observed, that the Mississippi dragoons were not in the action, but were, all the time it lasted, in the back ground of Lacoste's plantation. Two companies of Coffee's brigade had been left on the border of Laronde's plantation, to hold the horses whose riders had all dismounted; which reduces the number of fighting men to about one thousand eight hundred effective men. Plauché's battalion being composed of companies wearing each a distinct uniform, the enemy took those several companies for so many battalions, and represented them as such. I have thought proper to rectify this misrepresentation, by stating the number of each particular company."

The loss of the American troops was in killed 24, wounded 115, and missing 74. Of the British, one Major, two subalterns, and sixty three privates were made prisoners. And the author of the narrative admits that not less than 500 men fell on their side, "many of whom were our finest soldiers and best officers." "The victory," he adds, "was decidedly ours." After relating the repeated repulse of the British in their attempts to charge, Major Latour concludes, "It was now about half after nine, when the enemy having learned by experience, that he could not hope to obtain any advantage over our troops, and persuaded that he would greatly endanger his own safety by continuing the combat, in which he had already suffered so much, fell back to his

camp, where all the troops passed the night under arms, and without fire." "There can be but little doubt, "says General Jackson in his official letter, "that we should have succeeded on this occasion with an inferior force in destroying or capturing the enemy, had not a thick fog, which arose about 8 o'clock, occasioned some confusion among the different corps. Fearing the consequences under this circumstance of the further prosecution of a night attack, with troops then acting together for the first time, I contented myself with lying on the field that night; and at 4 in the morning assumed a stronger position, about two miles nearer to the city." Thus, this "decided victory" shrinks to a forlorn and uneasy occupation of their own camp, after a retreat from the ground on which the action was fought.

XIII.

Page 313.—Affair of the 28th December.

The total effective force of our army in the lines on this day, according to General Jackson's official letter, did not exceed 3000. The number of killed and wounded was only 15. The loss of the enemy must have been very great. It is estimated by Major Latour, at from two to three hundred.

XIV.

Page 321.—" Landing a number of guns from the flotilla, they increased their artillery to a *prodigious amount*."

An exact statement of this 'prodigious amount' is given by Major Latour, in the following passage of his Historical Memoir.

" The artillery was distributed on the lines in the following manner. On the soil of the road within the levée was battery No. 1, commanded by captain Humphreys, of the U. S. artillery. It consisted of two brass twelve-pounders, and a six-inch howitzer, on field carriages ; these pieces enfiladed the road towards that side where the enemy was posted, and their fire grazed the parapet of the flank of the redoubt, towards the right. Battery No. 1, was seventy feet from the bank of the river. The two twelve-pounders were served by soldiers belonging to the regular artillery, and the howitzer by dragoons of Major St. Geme's company.

" Battery No. 2, which had a twenty-four-pounder, was commanded by lieutenant Norris, of the navy, and served by part of the crew of the late schooner Carolina ; its distance from No. 1, was ninety yards. This battery was the most elevated above the soil.

" Battery No. 3. commanded by captains Dominique and Bluche, commanders of privateers, had two twenty-four-pounders, which were served by French mariners ; its distance from No. 2, was fifty yards.

"Battery No. 4, commanded by lieutenant Crawley, of the navy, and served by part of the crew of the Carolina, had a thirty-two-pounder; its distance from No. 3, was twenty yards.

"Battery No. 5, commanded by colonel Perry and lieutenant Kerr, of the artillery, had two six-pounders, its distance from No. 4, was one hundred and ninety yards.

"Battery No. 6, commanded by general Garrigues Flaujeac, and served by a detachment of the company of Francs, under the immediate command of lieutenant Bertel, had a brass twelve-pounder; its distance from No. 5, was thirty-six yards.

"Battery No. 7, had a long brass eighteen pound culverine, and a six-pounder, commanded by lieutenants Spotts and Chaveau, and served by gunners of the U. S. Artillery; its distance from No. 6, was one hundred and ninety yards.

"The 8th battery had a small brass carronade, which rendered very little service, on account of the ill condition of its carriage; it was commanded by a corporal of artillery, and served by militia men of general Carroll's command; its distance from No. 7, was sixty yards."

XV.

Page 324.—"By this reinforcement, together with the addition of a body of sailors and marines from the fleet, our numbers now amounted to *little short of eight thousand men.*"

Few subjects have been more misrepresented than the relative numerical strength of the Ame-

rican and British armies. Even in this country it has been pretty generally believed that the superiority of numbers was on the side of General Jackson; and of the distortion of the truth in England, we may form some idea from the above passage, in which the number of British is stated at short of 8000; and from the following sentence in pages 320, 321, "of the numbers of the enemy, again, various reports were in circulation; some stating them at 23, and others at 30,000; but perhaps *I may come nearer the truth*, if I choose a middle course, and suppose their whole force to *be about* 25,000 *men*." It was natural that men who had suffered so much, should exaggerate the numbers opposed to them; but the strength of the British army must have been well known to the author of the "narrative," whose misstatement therefore must be wilful and inexcusable. The true force of their army is circumstantially given by Major Latour, in the appendix to his valuable book.

"A list of the several corps composing the British army at the time of its landing on the shores of the Mississippi, with an estimate of their respective force.

4th regiment, king's own, lieutenant-colonel Francis Brooke	750 strong
7th do. Royal Fusiliers, lieutenant-colonel E. Blakeney	850
Carried over	1600

Brought forward	1600 strong
14th regiment, Duchess of York's own, (light dragoons) lieutenant-colonel C. M. Baker	350
21st* do Royal North Britain fusiliers, lieutenant-colonel W. Patterson	900
40th do. Somersetshire, lieutenant-colonel H. Thornton	1000
43d do. Monmouth (light infantry) lieutenant-colonel Patrickson	850
44th do. East Essex, lieutenant-colonel honourable Thomas Mullen	750
85th do. Bucks volunteers (light infantry) lieutenant-colonel William Thornton	650
93d do. Highland, lieutenant-colonel Robert Dale	1100
95th† do. Rifle corps, major Samuel Mitchell	500
1st do. West India, lieutenant-colonel C. W. Whitby	700
5th do. West India, lieutenant-colonel A. M. K. Hamilton	700
A detachment from the 62d regiment	350
Rocket brigade, artillery, drivers, engineers, sappers and miners	1500
Royal marines	1500
Sailors taken from the fleet	2000
Total	14,450

* Of this regiment we have seen two returns signed by D. Dervan, adjutant, of the 17th December and 5th January, each of which justify the amount here given—its establishment was one thousand two hundred and eight.

† This regiment consists of three battalions, of one thousand men each, of which only a demi-battalion was sent to Louisiana."

This statement is corroborated by the following letter.

"*New Orleans, April* 8, 1815.

"SIR,—During my detention in the British fleet, the officers, both naval and military, with whom I had an opportunity to converse, always estimated their force here on the 8th January, at ten thousand regular troops at least. An incident occurred relating to this subject on the evening of the 7th January, which you may think worth communicating. This day I had accidentally omitted to wear uniform: while at supper with the ward-room officers of the Gorgon frigate, a military officer, (whose name I disremember) was introduced as coming directly from camp; he took a seat at table, and began to talk freely about the situation of the army, his business in the fleet, and addressing himself principally to me, he having taken up the idea I was first lieutenant of the ship. After various inquiries about the two lines, I asked the number of British he supposed might be on shore, he replied, when the last reinforcements would be landed (which he had met three days before near Villeré's canal) there would be, marines and sailors inclusive, from thirteen to fifteen thousand men; he was certain of this, for he had seen some returns previous to his departure; this was an intelligent officer, having the grade of captain, who had been sent by the commander-in-chief to ascertain the quantity of provisions in the fleet. I am, &c.

ROBERT MORRELL, M. D.
United States Navy."

Instead of *eight* thousand, we have therefore the best authority for estimating the numbers of the British, at "little short of" *fourteen* thousand.

The misrepresentation of the American force is yet more striking. *It is unquestionably true, that the whole number of Americans within General Jackson's lines, on the 8th of January, did not exceed three thousand five hundred;* not one fourth of the British strength. This fact, which appears from a variety of documents, is fully established by the following passage of Major Latour's Memoir.

"In order to give a correct narrative of the affair of the 8th, I must previously make the reader acquainted with the respective position of the different corps stationed at the lines; that he may perceive, that if a considerable part of the troops exhibited no active valour, it was owing to the attack's not being made on their position; for had it been general, there can be no doubt but all would have equally vied in ardour and bravery.

"The redoubt on the river, in front of the extremity of the line on the right, was guarded by a company of the 7th regiment, commanded by lieutenant Ross. The artillery was served by a detachment of the 44th, under the command of lieutenant Marant. Within the line, at the extremity of the right, between battery No. 1, and the river, was stationed the New Orleans volunteer company of riflemen, about thirty men strong.

"The 7th regiment covered from that battery to battery No. 3, taking in the powder magazine, built since the 1st of January, as also battery No. 2, commanded by lieutenant Norris. This regiment, four hundred and thirty men strong, was commanded by major Peire.

"The interval between that battery and No. 4, commanded by lieutenant Crawley, was occupied by major Plauché's battalion of volunteer uniform companies, and by major Lacoste's battalion of Louisiana men of colour. The former was two hundred and eighty-nine men strong, and the latter two hundred and eighty.

"From battery No. 4, to colonel Perry's, No. 5, the line was defended by major Daquin's battalion of St. Domingo men of colour, one hundred and fifty men strong, and from that out by the 44th, two hundred and forty men strong, commanded by captain Baker. All the corps, from the 7th regiment to the 44th inclusively, were under the command of colonel Ross.

"Two-thirds of the remaining length of the line, were guarded by the troops commanded by major-general Carroll. On the right of battery No. 7, commanded by lieutenants Spotts and Chauveau, were stationed fifty marines, under the command of lieutenant Bellevue.

"On the preceding day, part of the Kentucky troops, under the command of general Adair, had gone to re-enforce that part of the line. The order in which they were ranged may be seen on the plan. All those troops formed a force of about sixteen hundred men.

"The troops under the command of general Coffee occupied the rest of the length of the line, as also that part which turned off towards the left into the wood; their number was about five hundred men.

"Captain Ogden's company of cavalry was stationed behind head-quarters, and a detachment of the Attakapas dragoons was posted within the court-yard, together about fifty men strong.

"During the attack, captain Chauveau's company

of horse volunteers, about thirty men strong, hasted from town and drew up in the same court-yard, to be ready for a sortie, should it be thought expedient.

" The Mississippi cavalry, commanded by major Hinds, one hundred and fifty men strong, was encamped in the rear, on Delery's plantation. Our outposts extended about five hundred yards in front of the line.

" Different detachments, making an aggregate of two hundred and fifty men of colonel Young's regiment of Louisiana militia, were stationed at convenient intervals, on the skirts of the wood, behind the line, as far as the Piernas canal.

" Four hundred yards behind the line, a guard was posted on the road, to prevent any one's going out of camp; and a line of sentinels extended from that post to the wood for the same purpose.

" Although the above details show the number of our troops to have amounted to about four thousand men, including one hundred artillerists who did not belong to any corps, it is nevertheless true, that general Jackson's line was defended by only three thousand two hundred men, the remaining eight hundred having been distributed into various detachments, and posted behind to guard the camp, for the defence of the Piernas canal, and on the outskirts of the wood."

XVI.

Page 330.—"The Americans, without so much as lifting their faces above the rampart, swung their firelocks by one arm over the wall, and discharged them directly upon their heads."

Never was there made a more ridiculous assertion than this. Destitute alike, of truth and probability, it must be considered absurd even in England, by those who have paid any attention to the circumstances of the action. The great disproportion in the number of British *officers* killed and wounded, proves that good aim must have been taken at the assailants; a thing not easy to have been effected, without "lifting their faces above the rampart." The rampart must, one would suppose, have been rather too broad to admit of a firelock being "swung over it," and discharged on the heads of the enemy immediately under it; and the author, and those who put faith in his assertion, must possess an exalted opinion of American strength to suppose it easy to swing a firelock "with one arm" over a wall, and discharge it upon an enemy. This anonymous "officer," who has attempted to fix a stig-

ma of cowardice upon the defenders of New Orleans, seems to be as deficient in judgment as in honour and honesty, for in proportion to the want of courage, displayed by their enemy, was the shame and disgrace of their own defeat enhanced.

In his official letter, General Lambert commits a more serious error, by stating that as the British troops advanced, "a continued and most galling fire was opened from every part of the line." Now it is certain that little more than one half of the line was engaged. The majority of the troops under General Coffee, did not fire at all; the engagement was almost exclusively confined to the right and left of the lines, and scarcely a shot was fired from the centre. See Latour's Memoir, page 244.

XVII.

Page 331.—"Making a forward motion, the 7th and 43d presented the appearance of a renewed attack; by which the enemy were so much awed, that they did not venture beyond their lines in pursuit of the fugitives."

All accounts represent the rout of the British, as a total and most confused and disgraceful one. Nothing was less calculated to excite "awe,"

than the appearance of these veterans, after the fire of the line had been opened upon them; and if the approach of the main body, had failed to intimidate our troops, it is not easy to believe, that the advance of the reserve could have produced that effect. It is true that General Lambert, in his official letter, speaks of "placing the reserve *in position*," on his making the discovery that "it was impossible to restore order in the regiments, where they were," yet this "position" seems to have been any thing but a "forward one." It is called by Major Latour, appropriately, "a *supine* position," since "the reserve and all those of the advanced columns, who escaped slaughter, were ordered to crouch down in the stubble, where they lay flat on their faces till night. This new evolution was executed, in order to avoid the fire of our artillery."—*App. p.* cli.

XVIII.

Page 332.—"The main body . . . amounted to no fewer than 1500 men."

The number of effective men on the right bank, did not exceed *eight* hundred. The British force was about equal to this, all regulars, well armed and disciplined. The Americans were nearly all new

militia. The force stationed on the right, which first gave way, was a corps of 250 Kentuckians, who, observes Major Latour, "were spent with fatigue and faint for want of food, having taken hardly any nourishment, since the morning of the 7th. They had marched five miles to the line in bad roads, sometimes knee deep in mud. It appears, also, that their arms were in an ill condition, their ammunition bad, and several of their muskets without flints, some having nothing but pebbles in their stead. What could be expected from men thus dispirited, ill armed, and exhausted with inanition and fatigue?"—*p.* 170.

XIX.

Page 332—"Like their countrymen on the other side, they were strongly entrenched, a thick parapet with a ditch covering their front; while a battery on their left, swept the whole position, and two field pieces commanded the road."

The following account of General Morgan's imperfect lines, which the author represents as a strong entrenchment, is given by Major Latour.

"General Morgan took the command of those troops, which, as I have already observed, he stationed along Raguet's old canal, where he had commenced lines of defence two hundred yards in length, which was but a very small portion of the whole length of the canal, this extending about two thou-

sand yards to the wood. Thus all that part on the right of the space of two hundred yards, where a breastwork had been begun, was without any other defence than a ditch, and exposed to be turned; this, we shall see, is what actually happened."—*p.* 166.

"Colonel Davis took his station on Mayhew's canal, about a mile in advance of Morgan's line, his left resting on the river bank. On the right of his detachment was stationed that of major Arnaud, consisting, as I have already observed, of one hundred men, of whom fifteen were without arms, and the others were armed with fowling-pieces. The enemy arrived in considerable force, and attacked that position with the troops that had landed, while his boats fired grape-shot at our flank. Colonel Davis made his troops fire two or three volleys, not without effect; but finding it impossible to maintain his ground any longer, as the enemy had already outflanked him on the right, seeing himself abandoned by the detachment of Major Arnaud, which, in spite of all the major's efforts to rally it, had taken to the wood, he determined to make his retreat on Morgan's lines, where he took a position on the right, along the canal, beyond the part that was fortified. It is to be observed, that owing to some cause to me unknown, there was a space unoccupied between the right of colonel Declouet, commanding the detachment of drafted militia, and colonel Davis's left. The troops under the latter's command, occupied a considerable front, the men were placed several feet from each other; and finally, on the same canal, but two hundred yards further to the right, was stationed lieutenant-colonel Caldwell, also of the drafted militia, with

a detachment of sixteen men. The disposition of the troops on these lines, when colonel Davis took his station there, was therefore as follows: The first regiment of militia, on the river; on its right the second regiment; on the right of this last, the drafted militia of Louisiana. These corps occupied the whole length of the fortified line. Next to this was a space unguarded, extending to the left of colonel Davis, whose command occupied on the canal three hundred yards in front; and finally two hundred yards from his right was stationed colonel Caldwell with sixteen men; the whole forming a total of about six hundred men, one-third of whom, as before observed, were ill armed. There were mounted on those lines three pieces of cannon, one a twelve-pounder, commanded by midshipman Philibert, and two six-pounders, the one commanded by Mr. Batique, formerly a captain of a vessel, the other by Mr. Hosmer, both these gentlemen belonging to the first regiment of militia.

"The enemy advancing rapidly by the road opposite the left of the line, the artillery played on him with effect, and as soon as he approached near enough, the musketry also began to fire; which having obliged him to fall back, he next directed his attack against our right, one column moving towards the wood, and the other towards the centre of the line. It was now that was felt the effect of the bad position that we occupied. One of the enemy's columns turned our troops, at the extremity of colonel Davis's detachment, while the other penetrated into the unguarded space between that detachment and the drafted militia. On this the Kentucky militia gave way, nor was it possible from that moment to rally them, though their officers and general Morgan made

every exertion for that purpose. Confidence had vanished, and with it all spirit of resistance. If, instead of extending over so considerable a space, those troops had been formed in close column, the confusion that took place might easily have been avoided; and in case of a retreat's becoming necessary, it might have been made in good order, our troops still keeping up their fire.—*p.* 170.

THE END.

Erratum in the Appendix.

Page 383, line 16, for *all* read *most*.

T. B. M. Mason.